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Refugees trapped as Krajina falls

Ian Traynor in Zagreb

SERBIA sent columns of tanks and artillery rumbling towards the Croatian border on Monday, in its first overt response to the crushing rebel Serb defeat in Krajina, as tens of thousands of refugees, fleeing the fighting, found themselves trapped between the warring factions.

Croat forces were reported to be conducting final mopping up operations against remaining Serb resistance after their lightning three-day offensive to seize the rebel capital, Knin. "I can say with great satisfaction that the military operations have ended. Croatia has re-established control over these areas," said the defence minister, Gojko Susak, the leading hawk in the government in Zagreb, the Croatian capital.

Fresh fighting had erupted early on Monday within hours of a UN-brokered agreement that would have assured Serb gunmen safe passage into northern Bosnia if they surrendered their weapons.

UN relief officials said up to 200,000 Serbs clogged the roads into northern Bosnia and that a humanitarian emergency was brewing. Thousands of civilian refugees also appeared to be trapped in pockets where Serb gunmen were refusing to surrender.

One refugee convoy was left burning after coming under shellfire. Bosnian Serb hospital officials said five people were killed and 15 wounded.

Natasha Rajakovic, spokeswoman for President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, admitted some refugees might be "caught in crossfire". Alexander Ivanko, a UN spokesman, said: "We have a human tragedy of enormous proportions in the making."

Serb civilians who took shelter in the UN base in the captured rebel stronghold of Knin reported individual cases of abuse by the Croatian army. One Serbian woman said she saw her husband murdered in front of her.

But there was no evidence of mass violations of human rights. Soldiers seemed to have systematically gathered all civilians in the UN compound south of the town and in two other collection sites.

The warmongering talk on all sides and the mobilisation of forces in the capital of Serbia proper, Belgrade, raised fears of a wider war shifting eastward, to the area of Croatia on the border with Serbia known as Eastern Slavonia or Sector East *(see map, page 7)*. But observers said the ominous moves could merely be sabre-rattling.

Croatia declared itself ready for combat to regain the lush west bank of the Danube in Eastern Slavonia.

Mr Susak bragged that his army had punctured the myth of Serb military invincibility and strongly asserted his claim to Eastern Slavonia — the last, and valuable, swath of land seized by the Serbs in 1991.

UN analysts said that a battle for the eastern region would almost inevitably draw in the Yugoslav army.

"Sector East is occupied," Mr Susak said. "Croatia will not give it up. Our estimate is that Croatia can liberate it by military action if not by negotiation."

Mr Susak's warning coincided with reports that President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia had ordered a partial mobilisation of the Yugoslav army and had sent heavy weaponry and tanks to Eastern Slavonia.

Despite UN criticism of the Croatian offensive, Zagreb is not worried about international isolation and condemnation. "The diplomats we're in contact with are impressed by the rapidity and efficiency of our operation. We didn't expect applause, but we're quite satisfied," Ms Rajakovic said.

The ripples from the abrupt collapse of Krajina extended into Bosnia where forces of the Sarajevo government, capitalising on Serb disarray, appeared to rout renegade Muslim forces in the Bihac pocket adjacent to Croatia. The rebels had been backed by Serbian allies.

The fallout from the rout of Krajina's Serbs continued to rock Bosnia's Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, who is locked in a power struggle with his army commander, General Ratko Mladic. Flanked by top aides, he appeared on Bosnian Serb television to denounce Belgrade leaders for failing to defend the Krajina Serbs.



Driven out . . . Serb refugees from Krajina make for the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Banja Luka on Monday PHOTOGRAPH: SAVA RADOVANOVIC

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Yeltsin seeks immediate peace talks

Leonard Doyle

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin has invited the Serbian and Croatian leaders to Moscow for immediate peace talks, but there was little expectation on Monday of a diplomatic breakthrough to end the fighting.

The European Union's diplomatic efforts were sidelined as its envoy, Carl Bildt, exchanged insults with the Croatian leadership. Zagreb has declared him persona non grata for suggesting that President Franjo Tudjman could be indicted for war crimes.

The former Swedish prime minister said he did not regret his criticisms of Croatia's fierce artillery bombardment of Knin.

"I am not only a mediator. I am also here to uphold certain values," he said. "We can't really condemn the shelling of Sarajevo or the rocket attacks against Zagreb and then say it's OK to do the shelling of Knin."

Questions are now being asked about Croatia's military objectives, with Serbian resistance wiped out in Krajina.

Offering to mediate between Mr Tudjman and Serbia's president, Slobodan Milosevic, Mr Yeltsin said Russia was sticking to its policy of trying to end the fighting by political methods. But in a sign of deepening Russian concern, he said for the first time that if peace efforts fail, the international community may have to resort to using force.

"If we fail to succeed with peace and the Serbs are unrestrained, then unfortunately power methods will be necessary," he said.

Court threat to France over tests

Mark Trevelyan in Wellington

NEW ZEALAND said on Tuesday it will try to haul France before the International Court of Justice in a bid to stop nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

But France immediately put a block on a court challenge. A foreign ministry spokesman, Yves Doutriaux, said it required the agreement of both parties to take any dispute to the court and "in the case of France, there is no such agreement".

Leaders of New Zealand's political parties unanimously agreed to try to reopen a 1973 legal challenge in the world court, even though Prime Minister Jim Bolger conceded the case was not strong. "This is an option that is open to New Zealand and we will take it as far as we can take it," he said.

Time is running out for any legal challenge, as President Jacques Chirac of France insists a series of up to eight underground nuclear blasts will begin at Mururoa atoll in French Polynesia next month.

Australia is likely to help New Zealand reopen its case, foreign affairs minister Gareth Evans said on Tuesday. New Zealand and Australia were both parties to the original 1973 case over French nuclear tests, which at that time were being conducted atmospherically but are now staged underground.

France, playing down Wellington's court bid, said that the move could be an effort to boost Mr Bolger's election prospects. "I think one must take into account internal policy motives for the agitation of this or that government," the European affairs minister, Michel Barnier, told French radio.

Meanwhile, the Philippines foreign minister, Domingo Siazon, warned that France's "blatant demonstration of nuclear capacity" could encourage Asian states to consider developing nuclear weapons.

As chairman of the group of 77 developing nations, Manila was drafting a UN resolution condemning nuclear testing which would name both France and China.

"The Philippines and many other countries that participated extensively in the bargaining to extend the non-proliferation treaty regard the French decision as a betrayal," said Mr Siazon.

He added: "The South Pacific island states feel very strongly that if France is going to carry out nuclear tests, it should do so in its backyard, not theirs."

Last week Paris recalled its ambassador to Canberra after Australia excluded the French state-owned aircraft company, Dassault, from bidding for a £230 million contract to supply jet trainers to the Australian air force.

On Sunday, Mr Bolger joined opposition leaders and peace campaigners at Auckland to see off the first boats of an international protest flotilla sailing to Mururoa atoll.

There has been speculation that France could bring forward the tests, planned for September, in order to stem the protests. However, in Papeete, the president of French Polynesia, Gaston Flosse, said no test would take place during the South Pacific Games planned from August 12-26 in Tahiti.

Mr Barnier said President Chirac would not bow to pressure to reverse his decision and cancel the tests. "Jacques Chirac has not taken this decision on a whim. It is a difficult decision but a necessary one," he said. — *Reuter*

Hugo Young, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.40
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 9.60	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Spain	P 275
Germany	DM 3.60	Sweden	SK 17
Greece	DR 400	Switzerland	SF 3.30
Italy	L 3,000	Thailand	60 Baht

Nuclear age has brought nothing but suffering

SUNDAY August 6 marked the 50th anniversary of the first use in war of nuclear weapons, at Hiroshima. The second was at Nagasaki, August 9, 1945. The 200,000 people who suffered and died as a result of these two bombings were the first victims of the atomic age. However, there were to be many more victims over the years, and not the least of these was Truth.

Truth was perhaps an innocent bystander when the atomic scientists in 1945 promised a new era of electric power "too cheap to meter". The next victims were the thousands of armed services personnel who were deliberately exposed to radioactive fallout to test its effects on fighting forces. American, Russian, British and Australian servicemen became victims as nations scrambled to join the nuclear club. And though many suffered horrible after-effects, the governments responsible have in most cases denied responsibility for their plight.

The indigenous peoples of America, Australia, the Pacific and Siberia suffered as their lands were used for nuclear testing. Their environment was poisoned, their hunting grounds contaminated, and their health in many cases destroyed. They will continue to be victims, as damaged genes produce both subtle and not-so subtle deformities in their offspring from generation to generation.

Those who have had the misfortune to live downwind (or downstream) of the many leaky nuclear plants around the world are also victims, although the atomic energy authorities vehemently deny responsibility for increased levels of cancer and radiation-related diseases in these areas.

Chernobyl, however, showed that we are all "downwinders", and that a single nuclear disaster can affect populations hundreds or even thousands of miles distant.

The environment is also a victim. Since 1945, huge amounts of radioactive waste have been dumped into seas, rivers and lakes. During the past 50 years, we have managed to inflict wounds on the environment that will take thousands of years to heal.

Nuclear weapons have proved more of a liability than an asset in assuring the security of nations — the demise of the Soviet Union was due at least in part to the huge costs of playing nuclear one-upmanship with the United States. Nuclear weapons have created instability in international affairs as rogue governments and even terrorist organisations attempt to obtain the power and status of possessing a nuclear device. As the Soviet Union has crumbled, so has the myth that it is possible to prevent nuclear devices and materials from falling into the wrong hands.

It should be clear to us after 50 years that to continue down this path is to condemn our descendants to become victims too. It is time to re-assess our commitment to nuclear technology, and to look to alternatives for our power and our security.

Mikhail Gorbachev showed the way forward when he called in 1986 for a worldwide commitment to a nuclear-free world by 2000. The current arms reductions being implemented by the US and Russia, while highly commendable, do not go far enough. Gorbachev's proposal has now been taken up by a group of non-governmental organisations (including the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and others) under the banner of "Abolition 2000". This initiative envisages the world community entering the next millennium with a time-bound framework for the abolition and destruction of all nuclear weapons. Let us call on our governments to endorse and support this proposal. If our current batch of political leaders will not respond positively to it, then let us find leaders who will.
Graham Daniell,
Perth, Australia

THE destruction of Hiroshima showed the Japanese that America now had the means to obliterate all their cities. Thus the war ended and a bloody invasion was not needed. But perhaps America should consider apologising for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki for which no adequate justification has ever been given.
John L Cox,
Teddington, Middlesex

Left's despair over Yugoslavia

ED VULLIAMY (For whom does the bell toll now?, July 23) is surprised that the left was united around the cause of Spanish democracy in the thirties, but is now split and confused over Yugoslavia. Why?

Spain had a democratically elected, left-leaning government that was threatened by the fascist states of Germany and Italy and abandoned by the European democracies. Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic state, albeit a flawed one. Against all principles of national sovereignty, the Germans recognised the breakaway state of Croatia — the one that fought alongside the Nazis. The break-up of Yugoslavia followed with jumped-up, small-time, nationalist politicians vying for power.

None of the new so-called governments has been democratically elected, nor have their borders been internationally determined or agreed, yet the West encouraged the process. Is it not ironic that, to return to the Spanish comparison, the West was able to institute a tight arms embargo on a left-wing republic, but in Yugoslavia it appears impotent?

The real reason the left, and almost everyone else, feels despair and helplessness over Bosnia is because there are no clear "goodies and baddies", only victims and perpetrators on all sides. The cynical and manipulative position of most western governments leave us with a sense of impotence and anger, but no useful or cohesive policy to stop the bloodshed.
John Green,
London

Muted outrage in South Pacific

ON July 29 the Rainbow Warrior arrived in Fiji. The day before, three cabinet ministers lost their jobs because they supported an opposition motion in parliament condemning the planned nuclear tests in French Polynesia (the first opposition motion to have been passed since 1992.) Our government is worried that if they condemn the French too strongly, France will retaliate by urging its EU partners to cut back on the favourable access of Fiji sugar to the European market.

Please don't underestimate the strength of feeling here on this issue. As European nationals ourselves we would urge your readers to do their utmost to make their own displeasure known to ensure that France cannot blackmail governments into submission.
Oliver Bennett, Betty Garscia,
Suva, Fiji

PRESIDENT CHIRAC has indicated that the decision to start testing nuclear weapons again is a signal that France will be adopting a more robust foreign policy. All over the world people are sending "counter-signals" indicating their conviction that the time for testing these weapons is over. We believe that in order for such "counter-signals" to be effective they must include a boycott of French exports, not as a punitive reaction against ordinary French people, but in order to persuade French public opinion, and in particular the influential farming lobby, that foreign policy has domestic repercussions.

Until the French stop nuclear-weapons testing, don't buy French wine and cheese.
Raymond Briggs, Julie Christie,
Charlotte Cornwell, Terry Gilliam,
Miriam Karlin, Tony Robinson,
Maggie Stead, Colin Archer,
International Peace Bureau,
Frank Blackaby,
President, British Nuclear Test Ban Coalition, London

US hooked on weapons

IT WOULD be nice to be able to believe Martin Walker that the US is being "weaned off the Pentagon" ("Pentagon trapped in political crossfire", July 16), but how could Walker have missed the fact that Congress has just voted to increase the military budget, actually giving the Pentagon more than it asked for? And this after telling us that we must spend less and severely cutting the needed social programmes.

Military down-sizing here is illusory. Bases and factories are closed and jobs are lost among people on the bottom, but lucrative contracts for unnecessary weapons like the Seawolf submarine are still doled out with massive profits for those at the top. The government even reimburses defence contractors for costs incurred while merging.

The US is like a junkie or alcoholic that's been dependent on a powerful, dangerous, reality-warping drug for the past 50 years. Addicts, as you know, usually have to hit bottom before they truly decide to try and quit. Stages of denial intervene. Now we're also "pushers" — we're far and away the largest arms dealer in the world — and the 12-Step Process has yet to begin.
Deborah Brovniak,
New York, USA

MARTIN Walker's article (May 28) on the "Christian" coalition in America left me wondering how Reverend Pat Robertson and his followers can square what seems to me to be a central plank of Christ's teaching — that we should show our love for God by caring for the poor and healing the sick — with supporting the Republican Party. That partly seems bent on withdrawing aid from the poor, slashing aid to poor countries and ruining any attempt to provide Medicare for the underprivileged.
Dr Jennifer Gibson,
Chogoria, Kenya

Briefly

CHRISTINE AZIZ (Rembrandt works being eaten away by the ink the artist used, August 6) tells us that Louis Damen, head of conservation at the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam, has applied for $2.4 million from the EU's Raphael fund to prevent further damage to his Rembrandt drawings.

As a forger, it has often been necessary for me to prepare the gall ink used by Rembrandt and other 17th century masters and to precipitate the effects of time upon it and the paper to which it has been applied. In the course of my nefarious activities I have also learnt how to arrest the action of the ink's acid content without in any way interfering with the drawn image. Presumably it is this knowledge that Louis Damen values at $2.4 million. If he contacts me he can have it at a tenth of the price.
Eric Hebborn,
Rome, Italy

IAN PAISLEY'S "heroic" speech "We will die if necessary rather than surrender," ("Orangemen's march bring Northern Ireland back to the boil", July 16), reminds me of the many old generals who sacrificed hundreds of thousands of young men in battles in many, many wars.

When will the young men and young women of Northern Ireland realise how tragic, how miserable, how hateful, how useless their parents' struggles have been?

Stop! Build for the future!
G P Stevens,
Cochrane, Alberta, Canada

QUITE ASIDE from the guilt or innocence of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, they were executed illegally ("CIA Lifts Veil on Rosenbergs", July 23). The crime they were found guilty of committing, conspiracy to commit espionage, is only a capital offence in time of war. The United States was not at war with the Soviet Union, which was still officially an ally, and the "state of war" which was used as a sleazy excuse for the death penalty, was the one still formally existing with Germany and Japan.
Martin R Hause,
Chester, Nova Scotia, Canada

JULIE FLINT'S report "Holy war in Sudan's hills" (July 30) confirms what ace photographer Leni Riefenstahl feared some 30 years ago. In 1967 I visited her in the Nuban hills where she was researching the Mesakin and Korongo tribes and recording them for posterity. In her subsequent book The Last Of The Nuba, she prophetically writes that she was "fortunate to get to know their traditional way of life . . . it was a view into a Paradise that will soon vanish".
Elisabeth Cox,
Teddington, Middlesex

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Thousands remember day of the bomb

Edward Pilkington

SURVIVORS began streaming into the centre of Hiroshima before dawn on Sunday, determined to console the spirits of the dead ahead of the crush. Some stood praying silently on the river bank; others lit incense marking the spots where loved ones had died.

As the sun rose, a crowd gathered in front of the memorial mound in the city's Peace Park where the ashes of tens of thousands of bodies, so badly charred they could not be identified, were buried in 1945.

Many of the survivors were attending commemorations for the first time. For 49 years they had shied away from the public face of mourning, but on Sunday they somehow managed to summon up the strength.

Elderly women were predominant, shielding themselves from the heat with parasols and wide-brimmed hats. Among them was Tamaio Seo, a tiny woman who arrived at 6.30am with her son, Teruaki.

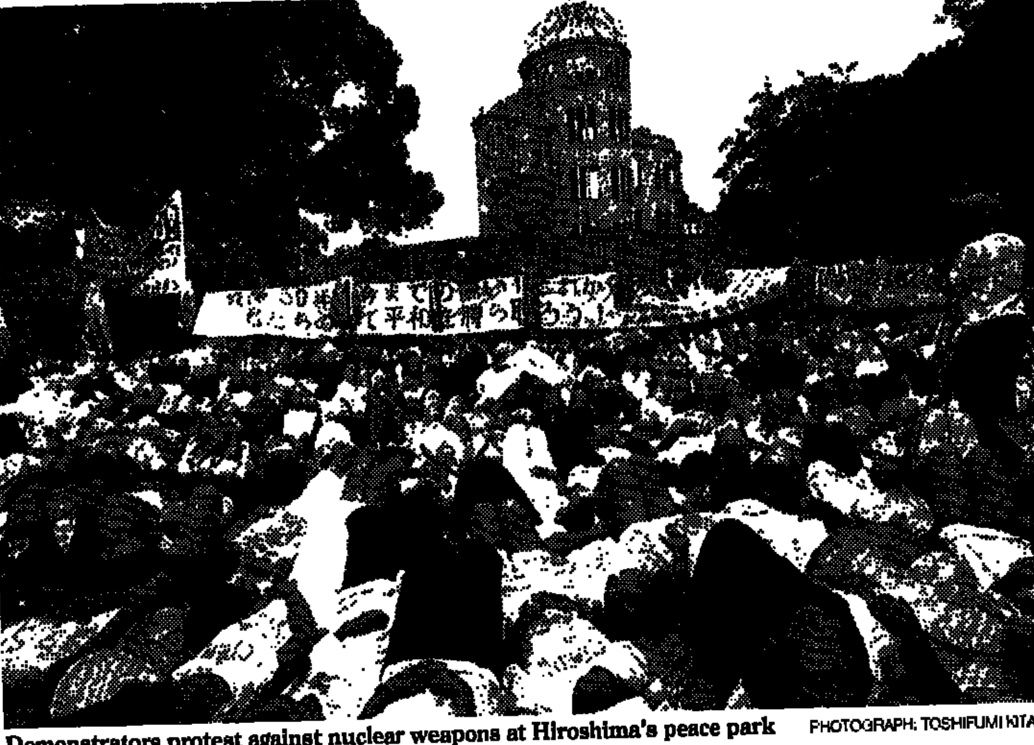
They were carrying two bouquets in memory of her husband, who died in the blast. One they placed at the cenotaph in the Peace Park, the other they were taking to Hiroshima Castle, half a mile away, where they believe he died.

"My mother could not tell his remains apart from so many other corpses, so we cannot be sure exactly where he was. To me, the whole of Hiroshima is a tomb," Teruaki said.

The sun was well up by 8am, unveiling a day similar to that 50 years ago. Then, too, there were wisps of cloud — insufficient, however, to turn back the Enola Gay which was under strict orders to drop the bomb only in clear visibility.

Fifty thousand had poured into the park by 8.15am when a bell tolled at the start of a minute's silence. The moment was as quiet as the original had been deafening — survivors call the blast the "pikidon", an onomatopoeic phrase for the bomb's brilliant flash followed by its thunderous roar.

Messages of condolence were delivered by senior Japanese politicians, speaker after speaker condemning the French decision to resume nuclear tests.



Demonstrators protest against nuclear weapons at Hiroshima's peace park PHOTOGRAPH: TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA

Even on such a day, politics made its inevitable entrance. Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama, pointedly failed to make any apology for Japan's conduct in the war, focusing wholly on the atomic victims.

Hiroshima's cenotaph, which stood at Mr Murayama's back, made a more generous gesture towards peace. Its inscription says: "Please sleep easily", then adds: "Never repeat such mistakes again". The message is ambivalent — it could equally refer to Japan's decision to start the war as America's to end it by dropping the bomb.

After the official commemoration, areas of the park took on an almost jamboree atmosphere. There was music from a popular singer who had rowed to Hiroshima from Okinawa, more than 800 miles away.

A Japanese artist floated 1,000 umbrellas on a river in celebration of the "cycle of water, source of life". He requested donations at $150 per umbrella — donors got to keep the umbrella which they were told would act as "an energy field for peace".

Further afield countless private displays of remembrance were taking place. At the memorial for the 20,000 Koreans who died in the bombing — many of them forced labourers — a Korean man was telling a story. He related how he had been living in Japan with his younger brother. Work had been scarce so he told his brother, against his will, to move to Hiroshima for a job.

"Japan's post-war era may come to an end when it repents for what it did. But my post-war will last until I die. Every day I think of my little brother. When I die we will meet in another world, and then I hope he will forgive me."

Close by in "temple town", people were also thinking of another world. This is Hiroshima's main burial site and in parts almost every other headstone bears the date August 6, 1945. In an ancient local tradition, lanterns of brightly coloured paper called toros are placed by the tomb to cheer up the spirits of the dead. Relatives pour water over the tombstone — a poignant act in Hiroshima where many atomic victims died crying for water to drink.

Yoshie Ueno, aged 76, had brought a lantern for her son. She was living close to temple town when the blast destroyed her house.

The only sign she and her husband could find of their son was the mattress on which he had been lying; it had been blown on top of a telegraph pole 30 metres away. He was nine days old.

As dusk fell 10,000 floating lanterns were lit and launched on the river, representing dead souls returning to the next world. Some stayed proudly erect as they drifted out to sea, others caught fire and slowly sank.

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Sixth Cali cartel leader caught in Colombia

Chris Torchia and Gilles Castonguay in Bogotá

POLICE on Sunday captured Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, the reputed leader of the world's most powerful drug gang, after he eluded a dragnet for months.

Mr Rodríguez, aged 51, was the sixth alleged leader of the Cali cartel to wind up in custody in the past two months.

He is believed to hold evidence indicating President Ernesto Samper's 1994 election campaign took drug money. But asked if he gave money to Mr Samper's campaign, Mr Rodríguez shook his head and said: "I believe the president is an honest man."

He described as lies the recent testimony by Mr Samper's former campaign treasurer, who has told prosecutors the president knew the Cali cartel gave millions of dollars to his campaign.

However, a cartel member said on Saturday that Mr Rodríguez had feared he would be killed by security forces because he provided evidence linking top government officials to traffickers. To get police to ease up on the hunt for him, Mr Rodríguez left evidence for them to find showing Mr Samper's campaign took Cali cartel money, said the source.

The evidence — found during a police raid last month on Mr Rodríguez's apartment in Cali — included a list of those who have received drug payoffs. It led to the resignation last week of the defence minister, Fernando Botero, and the arrest of Mr Samper's campaign treasurer, Santiago Medina.

US drug agents say Mr Rodríguez was more involved in the Cali cartel's daily drug business than his brother, Gilberto, who was arrested in June.

The brothers sought respectability in later years, building up a business empire of car dealerships, pharmacies, property and farmland. Miguel studied law and was a bank president at one point.

Their power and influence became so great that they rivalled their arch-enemy Pablo Escobar and his Medellín cartel.

The government had planned to try Miguel Rodríguez in absentia this year. But that effort ran into trouble when two top judicial officials were arrested and accused of planning to manipulate the trial in his favour. — *Reuter*

Noll Scott adds: Before Mr Rodriquez's arrest there was a rising chorus of demands for President Samper's resignation following publication of damning allegations that he knew the Colombian cocaine traffickers had contributed more than $6 million to his election campaign last year.

A leading political analyst, Eduardo Pizarro, said the president's resignation would not help the country.

"It would have a devastating effect," he said, adding that it would encourage the country's Marxist guerrillas to bolster their war against the state.

In a public opinion poll, 77 per cent of Colombians believed Mr Samper's campaign took money from the Cali cartel. But they were almost equally divided on whether Mr Samper was aware of the contributions: 45 per cent believed he knew about them while 41 per cent thought he did not.

American narcotics agents have long suspected that Mr Samper's election campaign was tainted by drug money. For months, the case hinged on tapes of telephone conversations in which Cali traffickers discussed million-dollar donations to Mr Samper's campaign.

The forced resignation last week of Mr Botero, who was Mr Samper's former campaign manager, and publication of detailed testimony from Mr Medina, his campaign treasurer, have increased the pressure to the point where the president's short-term political survival is at stake.

Mr Medina, who has been arrested for his alleged role in accepting money from the traffickers, testified that on April 29, 1994, Mr Botero told him the campaign needed financial support offered by the Cali cartel, the world's main distributor of cocaine.

When he told Mr Samper about Mr Botero's statement, Mr Samper said "very nervously that he wanted to be out of the loop on this and that I should co-ordinate it with Fernando Botero," according to the testimony.

Japan may go down the nuclear route

Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo

JAPAN'S parliament came back from its summer holidays yesterday to express outraged condemnation of France's resumption of nuclear tests. As "the only nation to experience an atomic bombing" Japan claims a special indignation.

Yet many commentators believe that the next century will see Tokyo abandon its "three nuclear Nos" — never to manufacture, possess or store nuclear weapons — and become a nuclear power. The former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger predicted last month that diverging US and Japanese interests and short-sighted policies by Washington could push Tokyo this way.

"The rise of China, the unification of Korea, the possible shift of the centre of gravity of Russian policy toward Siberia — all have a different significance for Japan than they have for the United States," Dr Kissinger told the senate foreign relations committee.

He put his fingers on the key elements, especially if Tokyo feels that it can no longer trust the US nuclear umbrella under which it currently shelters. With no oil or natural gas reserves, and coal stocks nearly exhausted, Japan saw nuclear power as a clean supply of energy which would lessen its dependence on Middle East oil.

Nuclear's share of Japan's energy supplies now tops 25 per cent. Japan is the world's third largest producer of nuclear power, behind the United States and France, and ahead of the UK. Japan wants to double nuclear production to at least 70 million kilowatts by 2010.

The Socialists, who used to be opposed to the spread of nuclear plants, are now part of the government and their leader is the prime minister. As part of the complicated horsetrading over the 1995 budget, the Socialist party agreed to back down on its opposition to use of recycled plutonium in nuclear plants.

Japan is the only country pursuing commercial use of fastbreeder reactors which use plutonium as fuel. Experts fear the potential for mischief by rogue governments and terrorists.

Nuclear weapons technology is relatively simple for an advanced country like Japan. Almost alone among the world's richest countries, Japan is increasing military spending. The defence agency is pressing for a 4 per cent rise this year, which has split the coalition government with the socialists arguing for a smaller rise.

● Signs grew on Monday that the Japanese prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama, may end 50 years of silence next week and formally apologise for Japan's actions in the second world war, *Reuter reports.*

In an indication that an unprecedented apology may be close, Mr Murayama told the former German president, Richard von Weizsäcker, that he was reading again a speech Mr Weizsäcker gave on Germany's war responsibilities 10 years ago.

Mr Murayama's comment, and the apology on Sunday by the mayor of Hiroshima, triggered speculation that Japan might finally apologise on August 15, the 50th anniversary of its defeat in the war.

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Colombo struck by suicide bomber

Suzanne Goldenberg and agencies

A TAMIL Tiger suicide bomber disguised as a coconut seller struck at the heart of the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, on Monday, killing at least 22 people and injuring 52 others.

The bomber, an Indian Tamil, had been ordered to destroy "a motorcade with tinted windows", police said later.

The man was stopped in Colombo on Sunday with an accomplice pushing the cart, laden with explosives and coconuts, but only the accomplice was detained, police said. "We questioned them. The bomber could speak Sinhalese and said he was merely selling king coconuts, and he was allowed to go off," Colombo police chief G B Kotakadeniya said.

A senior police officer said the bomber had been given a mission by the intelligence chief of the Tamil Tiger rebels to wheel his cart until he found "a motorcade with tinted windows" and then blow it up. Police sources said his target had been more specifically a motorcade either carrying the president or her deputy defence minister.

In a separate incident in the eastern Sri Lankan town of Batticaloa on Tuesday morning, at least two people were killed and 12 wounded when a parcel bomb ripped through a market. The bomb was believed to have been planted by Tamil Tiger rebels in a beef stall.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the Colombo incident. The mangled corpses of two men, suspected of being the bomber and a possible accomplice, were kept for examination at the scene of the explosion in Independence Square. Police said they believed the explosives were detonated before the bomber reached his target.

The bombing is seen as a show of defiance to the government's latest efforts to end the war by announcing an adventurous reform package.

The constitutional proposals would transform the country from a unitary state to a "union of regions", and would give self-government to the Tamil-dominated areas in the north-east.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga has met Sinhalese and Muslim politicians and representatives of Tamil parliamentary parties to try to sell them the package, which the government says is the best hope for peace.

But the government's most dangerous opponent is not expected to back the plan. "We're working on the basis that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] will not accept," said Mangala Moonesinghe, the Sri Lankan high commissioner in New Delhi, and until recently the head of a parliamentary select committee on constitutional change.

Instead, he said the government hopes the plan will further isolate the Tigers, who are already under pressure from a Sri Lankan army offensive that has cost hundreds of fighters and 30 square miles of territory.

"When you have any kind of a political initiative calculated to isolate the Tigers like this, then this blast would be seen by some people as a reminder that the government can't do that without major disruption in the south, and that the bombers are people to take note of," Neelan Tiruchelvam, a Tamil constitutional expert, said.

Human rights activists in Colombo have criticised the government for heavy civilian casualties during its offensive, including the bombing of a church in which women and children had sought refuge.

Aid groups say about 200 civilians have been killed and more than 600 injured in the past month. A government embargo has caused shortages of food and medicine in the Jaffna peninsula, adding to the suffering.

The renewed fighting comes as human rights workers have noted disturbing signs that death squads are again operating in Colombo. More than 20 Tamil civilians have disappeared since April, and several bodies have been washed up on beaches near the capital.

President Kumaratunga said on Monday she could not improve on her devolution plan, and that the Tigers could only lose by opposing it. She said they did not represent all Tamils, who she claimed were "very satisfied" with her package.

This week's explosions underline the dangers of excluding the Tigers. Newspapers in Colombo had anticipated an attack after an offshoot of the Tigers threatened revenge for alleged army atrocities.

The Eelam force had previously used small bombs. If the explosions are their work, the chances of peace have grown yet more remote.



Law and disorder . . . The annual 'Chaos Days' in the north German city of Hanover, aimed at causing maximum disturbance, last weekend saw running street battles between punks and policemen that left more than 100 officers requiring treatment PHOTOGRAPH CHRISTOF SAC

Kenya may reverse reforms

Chris McGreal in Nairobi

KENYA is reassessing its commitment to political and economic reform because of the "contemptuous" and "hostile" behaviour of the British Overseas Development Minister, Lynda Chalker, on her recent visit to Nairobi.

A statement from the president's offices accused Baroness Chalker of a breach of diplomatic etiquette for holding a press conference to announce Britain's withholding of direct aid before she met President Daniel arap Moi.

"The Kenya government views this behaviour as impolite and contemptuous and likely to hurt the relations between the two countries. Baroness Chalker's hostile attitude towards Kenya found eloquent expression in this diplomatic blunder," the statement said.

President Moi went further, scorning Baroness Chalker as "just a woman", and telling farmers she had the attitude of a kindergarten headmistress. But his real concern was not so much diplomatic niceties as Baroness Chalker's open attack on political repression, harassment of the press, show trials and corruption.

Rebuffing the British high commission's attempts to backtrack on her statement, the Kenyan government warned that if its reforms were criticised it would reassess the limited political changes and economic liberalisation it has adopted under pressure from international donors.

Kenya also issued a veiled warning, saying British business had profited from Kenya, pointing out that Barclays Bank made £4 million last year. Some Kenyan opposition politicians have welcomed the suspension of direct aid, terming it of dubious benefit to the majority of Kenyans.

While funds aimed at specific projects are unaffected and mostly welcomed — even if there are questions about the effect of Britain's police training programme on Kenya's notoriously brutal force — much of the £11 million of frozen aid was destined for the Moi administration's coffers.

In effect, it helped subsidise a web of political patronage and graft by enabling the government to release funds for projects such as the construction of a £62 million airport in President Moi's home town, Eldoret — neither a tourist destination nor an economic centre.

West Bank protesters defy ban

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

MILITANT Jewish settlers in the West Bank on Monday occupied two hilltops north of Jerusalem in a renewal of protest against the impending extension of Palestinian self-rule.

The action, in defiance of a government ban, took place at the settlements of Nebi Samwi, north of the city, and Beit El, near the Palestinian town of Ramallah. Rightwing Israelis from Jerusalem swelled the protest, in an attempt by the militants to show they have support within Israel.

The demonstrations followed a three-day "truce" in which the settlers tried and failed to dent the government's determination to secure a new self-rule deal with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Israeli ministers dismissed the attempt to rally public opinion, which has so far been apathetic to the settler cause. The prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, said: "We live in a real democratic country . . . and the government will carry out its policy," he said.

On Monday night, the foreign minister, Shimon Peres, met the PLO chairman, Yasser Arafat, in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba, in an attempt to kickstart the autonomy talks. On both sides, officials are cautiously optimistic about a comprehensive deal by mid-September.

The negotiations on handing over to the Palestinians, frequently interrupted by suicide bombings and other attacks by Islamist extremists, are bogged down on technical details, including which civil powers should be transferred; how much control the PLO should have over precious water supplies; and the terms of Palestinian elections.

However, on both sides there is a clear but contradictory view of priorities. The Israelis want to give maximum attention to security; the PLO wants land.

Cuts bite into Europe's food mountains

John Palmer in Brussels

THE European Union's food mountains are crumbling as stocks fall to their lowest level for years. Some of the mountains have disappeared altogether.

Although the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) remains a favourite target for Eurosceptic jibes, reform has bitten deep. The European Commission says reserves of cereals, which stood at 33 million tonnes two years ago, have fallen to about 6 million. Butter stocks have fallen from around 1 million tonnes in the late 1980s to 25,000 tonnes, and beef stocks from 1.1 million tonnes to 40,000.

"For some of these products . . . we could dispose of the little that remains in reserve almost overnight if we wanted to," a Commission official said. The figures reflect the Commission's cutback in production incentives in the past five years, part of its CAP reforms.

"You could say that the reduction in cereals stocks has gone further and faster than we planned, and European prices for cereals are now more or less the same as world prices," the official pointed out. EU farm spending in the past year was more than £2 billion below its planned ceiling, he said.

Partly to slow the reduction in cereal production, the agriculture commissioner, Franz Fischler, has said that farmers would not be obliged to set aside as much agricultural land as in the past year.

Officials admit CAP reform has much further to go. "You can say we have dealt with the key surplus products grown mainly in northern Europe, but we now have to deal with some very sensitive issues in southern Europe, such as the regimes for wine, fruit and vegetables," the official said.

In spite of progress in bringing the agricultural budget under better control — it now accounts for less than half EU spending — the outlook next year is uncertain. Although production will be sharply curbed, the full cost of compensating farmers for the devaluation of some currencies — including the lira and the peseta — has yet to be felt.

The full benefits of CAP reform will only be felt towards the end of the decade. But the Commission knows there is no plain sailing ahead. The EU is committed to opening its doors to perhaps 15 more countries in the next 10 years. The accession of eastern European countries will accelerate the CAP's transformation.

But there will be no going back to the free-for-all days when national farming ministers looted the EU budget to reward their agricultural constituencies.

The Week

IVAN KIVELIDI, director of a Russian bank and head of a politically influential entrepreneurs' group, died from poisoning in an apparent contract killing, the most prominent Russian businessman to be killed this year.

IN the largest sexual harassment settlement yet negotiated, a New York cosmetics company, Del Laboratories, whose chief executive, Dan K Wassong, aged 65, allegedly screamed obscenities and occasionally fondled at least 15 female assistants, agreed to pay $1,185,000.

PAKISTANI government leaders were conspicuously absent at the burial of Agha Hassan Abedi, the founder of the failed Bank of Credit and Commerce International, who died in Karachi, aged 73.
Obituary, page 21

THE Cyprus trial of three members of the Royal Green Jackets on charges of killing a Danish tour guide was adjourned so that 50 pages of notes belonging to an Israeli police expert on DNA could be translated from Hebrew into English.

CAPTAIN SCOTT O'GRADY, the fighter pilot who was hailed as an all-American hero after surviving for six days behind Serb lines, has dismayed his military superiors by saying he plans to retire from the air force this year.

MEXICO'S ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party suffered an historic defeat in Baja California Norte when the state voted for the conservative National Action Party to stay in office for a second six year-term.

TRINIDAD lifted a state of emergency and freed the House speaker, Occah Sepaul, after three days of house arrest prompted by what the prime minister, Patrick Manning, described as "a diabolical conspiracy to overthrow the government". Ms Seapaul is charged with tarnishing her office by giving inconsistent testimony under oath.

A US diplomat is due to meet Harry Wu, the naturalised US citizen arrested in China and accused of stealing state secrets, according to the State Department.

COLOMBIAN Marxist guerrillas launched an offensive in the central and eastern regions of the country on Monday, killing more than 40 people, in a cynical commemoration of President Ernesto Samper's first year in office.

RUSSIA'S counter-intelligence service detained a US citizen near a secret Siberian nuclear plant. The man, from the army's West Point academy, was freed after a few hours, Itar-Tass news agency said.

Fury as US denies Gulf war syndrome exists

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

SICK and dying veterans of Operation Desert Storm last week accused the US government of a cover-up after a Pentagon inquiry said there was no such thing as Gulf war syndrome.

Campaigners condemned the report, the first outright rejection of long-held claims that soldiers who fought against Iraq in 1990-91 picked up a mysterious disease which has killed 3,000 US service personnel and disabled 120,000. More than 1,700 British Gulf veterans have been afflicted, according to activists.

Stephen Joseph, US assistant secretary for defence for health affairs, said the Pentagon's $10 million study, based on examinations of more than 10,000 veterans and their families, "continues to show no clinical evidence for new or unique illnesses or syndromes among Persian Gulf veterans".

Protesters, gathering in Washington last week for an unofficial inquiry of their own, dismissed the findings. "The proof is in the veterans," said Frank Spagnoletti, a lawyer. "The Pentagon can say what they want, but people are sick, people are dying."

Mr Spagnoletti is fighting a class action suit on behalf of veterans against two companies which allegedly shipped biological and chemical weapons to Iraq before the war.

"We believe there's a cover-up," said Vic Silvester, a British-born Texan whose 25-year-old son James has been sick since his return from service in the Gulf four years ago.

The Pentagon report concludes that, while each of the veterans' ailments is real enough, there is no syndrome connecting them all. It blames stress-related anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, arthritis and backache.

The Pentagon's stance appears to contradict the White House. Last March, President Bill Clinton promised to "leave no stone unturned" in the search for an answer. The defence department itself conceded in March that one in six Gulf veterans had ailments that could not be diagnosed.

Campaigners say they do not know the exact cause of Gulf war syndrome, but they want the government to find out. Some believe, contrary to military reports at the time, that Scud missiles fired by Iraq contained a cocktail of chemical and biological weapons, which infected the allied troops.

Others blame the inoculations and preventive medication administered by the allies' own doctors, alleging that they were untested and had dangerous side-effects.

In a hurry to claim his place in history

The conquest of Knin seals Franjo Tudjman's dream to be the father of Croatian independence, writes **Ian Traynor**

UNTIL first light last Friday, Franjo Tudjman had fought two wars in four years. And lost two. The first to the Serbs in 1991. The second to the Muslims of Bosnia in 1993. But within 36 hours the Croatian *sahovnica* — the red-and-silver chequerboard national emblem feared and hated by the Serbs — was planted atop the ancient castle that overlooks Knin, the very heart of the Serb insurgency, crowning the long career of a president who has passed from communist fanatic to nationalist zealot.

It was the greatest military victory in Croatian history, Tudjman crowed to the nationalist ravers who spilled on to the streets of Zagreb last Saturday night. One thing is for sure. Tudjman will be donning the brilliant white-and-gold uniform recently run up for him by a Croatian fashion designer to parade before his army and people as Generalissimo, like a throwback to some southern European triumphalist of the 1930s. Not so much Hitler or Stalin as Mussolini or Franco.

Il Duce has been waiting a long time for the apotheosis marked by the fall of Knin, doing two terms in communist jails for his unremitting nationalism, and spending the past four years licking his wounds and building his army after the military disasters of 1991.

On the surface, it seems a pitiful prize. A dusty, dowdy little railway town in the stark Dalmatian hinterland, Knin is a kind of Balkan Crewe. But for a president who talks millennia, not months or years, and is obsessed with posterity's verdict, the conquest of Knin, where medieval Croatian kings once sat and from where the Serb rebels crippled and partitioned his country, is an orgasmic victory.

For the Serbs of Krajina, the old frontier area that historically marked the divide between Christian Europe and the sway of the Sublime Porte, the fall of Knin, the Krajina capital, may prefigure the end of their 400-year-old presence in these parts. For no matter what pledges of safety and human rights the Zagreb regime proffers its Serb minority now, there are few who will trust their future, and that of their children, to life in Tudjman's Croatia.

Small wonder, given his regime's record since he swept to power in April 1990 in the first post-communist free elections. Immediately, he embarked on a purge of the key instruments of power — the police, the media, the big economic enterprises. He claimed he was only getting rid of old-style communist apparatchiks. But the struggle of democracy versus communism had already been supplanted by the national contest of Croat versus Serb. Democracy was the loser in a country that Tudjman regularly insists is the most democratic state in the post-communist world.

In those days, the year before the Yugoslav wars started, raw, young Croatian police recruits would be ordered into mainly Serb villages and towns to seize control of communities that had traditionally policed themselves. And Tudjman would spend Sunday mornings playing tennis with his cronies on the edge of Zagreb, musing about carving up Bosnia between himself and Serbia. Bosnia's Muslims are just apostate and cowardly Croats, he believes.

One such frosty Sunday morning at the indoor tennis court, surrounded by German BMWs and French martial-arts experts in black jumpsuits, he sniggered that Croatia would soon have its own national team in the Davis Cup.

But first there was the problem of Knin and Croatia's restive 600,000 Serbs. With Belgrade already eagerly stirring the poison pot of ethnic hatred among the 12 per cent minority Serbs, Tudjman's blundering and insensitive treatment of an explosive problem pre-programmed the war.

Like the late Yugoslav dictator, Tito, Tudjman was born in 1922 in the rolling, hilly country north of Zagreb. He was just about to turn 20 when the Nazis and the Italians occupied Yugoslavia in 1941 and sponsored the establishment of the Ustashe state comprising Croatia and Bosnia.

He joined the fledgling partisan resistance, headed by Tito, that fought the Germans and the Ustashe, and rose rapidly through the ranks, largely on account of his commitment to communism. Before he was 40, Tudjman was a general, the youngest such officer in the Yugoslav army, where he was prominent in attending to communist indoctrination as one of the army's main commissars.

In 1961, he left the military to devote himself to historical study, a move that resulted in his conversion from communism to nationalism. Studying details of the second world war that Tito had ruthlessly suppressed, Tudjman became convinced that the sins of the Ustashe had been greatly exaggerated, that Croatia was the victim of a communist and Serbian plot aimed at for ever repressing its cultural and political identity and freedoms.

His conversion matched the temper of the times in Zagreb which, in the late 1960s, was in the grip of a national, and liberalising revival. Tito cracked down hard in 1971 on what was known as the Croatian Spring. As one of the movement's foremost exponents, Tudjman was arrested and jailed. He was later kicked out of the communist party and branded a fascist for querying the official line on the partisan-Ustashe conflict.

ILLUSTRATION: PETER CLARKE

The 1971 crackdown ushered in two decades of Croatian quiescence, known as the silent years, which were rudely shattered by the noisy eruptions of 1990-91. Tudjman's growing nationalism, and his switch to the right, earned him another jail term in the 1980s. But he emerged from prison into the era of Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade, who was busy exploiting Serbian nationalism to maximise his power and trigger the collapse of Yugoslavia.

Sandwiched by the uncompromising Milosevic to the east, and the small liberalising Slovenia to the west, eager to secede from Yugoslavia, the Croats had to come off the fence. That happened finally at the last Communist Party congress in Belgrade in January 1990, a seminal event in the collapse of Yugoslavia. The Slovenes walked out. Milosevic tried to seize control of the entire party and failed. The Croats hesitantly sided with the Slovenes and walked out, too.

Three months later, the Croatian communists collapsed at their first free election after introducing a first-past-the-post system that backfired by entrenching Tudjman in power. His rightwing HDZ, or Croatian Democratic Union, was set up in 1989, its coffers generously filled by the anti-communist diaspora in North America, Germany and Australia. Tudjman romped home with 41 per cent of the vote.

The campaign message was one of uncompromising nationalism, with no gestures of goodwill to the Serb minority. Tudjman was grateful, he told supporters, that he was married to neither a Serb nor a Jew. With Milosevic entrenched in Belgrade spoiling for war, Tudjman triumphant in Zagreb conspiring by his every blunder to help Milosevic, Bosnia's leader, Alija Izetbegovic, wryly remarked that the choice between the two was like choosing between leukaemia and a brain tumour. Tudjman and Izetbegovic now pretend to be buddies, allied against the Serbs, but it is an alliance of expediency, pressed on them by the Americans. Tudjman has a visceral contempt for Bosnia's Muslims and fondly imagines himself a match for Belgrade's Milosevic, who has consistently outwitted him.

The main difference between the two is that Milosevic's jump from communism to nationalism was supremely cynical, exclusively aimed at maintaining and extending his power, while Tudjman, similarly authoritarian and power-fixated, is a true believer, an emotional nationalist. The other key difference is that at 73, Tudjman is 20 years older than Milosevic and in a hurry to realise his principal aim, to go down in history as the daddy of independent Croatian statehood.

Until Saturday night's revelry in Zagreb, the biggest moment in the campaign came in January 1992 when Germany succeeded in bullying the European Union into recognising an independent Croatia. "Danke Deutschland" was the ditty that raced up the Croatian charts and Tudjman basked in self-proclaimed glory, despite just having lost a war that cost a quarter of his country and crippled the bits that remained. Still four years is not a long time to wait for revenge in Tudjman's millennial scheme of things. Provided that Milosevic and his Serbian army keep their distance, the Croatian leader should be able to build on the current rout of the rebels.

MEANWHILE, given the national and the military imperatives, democracy takes a back seat in a Croatia in which Tudjman's HDZ has replaced the communists as a one-party regime. There is a younger generation of technocrats, academics and politicians waiting in the wings who will steward Croatia to democracy once Tudjman has gone. For the most part, they serve the regime, mitigating its harsher excesses and shaking their heads in frustration at the caprices of their leader.

Historically, and also at present, Croatia is split between the communist and fascist tendencies, the partisan-Ustashe rivalry that continues to colour Croatian politics. The ruling party is similarly divided into hawks and doves that reflects this old duality.

Tudjman is constantly playing one faction off against another, trying to bridge in his own split personality the historical rift and heal the wounds. In one such move, aimed at appeasing the émigré nationalist lobby, he personally renamed the Victims of Fascism Square in central Zagreb the Square of Croatian Giants. After the conquest of Knin, Tudjman sees himself as the greatest Croatian giant of them all.

Martin Walker is on holiday

The leading lights of Zagreb's ruling élite

GOJKO SUSAK, Croatian defence minister: No one better represents the power of the worldwide Croatian diaspora in the fight for an independent Croatia than Mr Susak, ardent nationalist, fierce anti-communist, and former Canadian pizza merchant.

A native of the Croatian nationalist heartland, western Herzegovina, beyond Croatia's borders, Mr Susak is a closet champion of the Greater Croatia dream. Returning to Zagreb in the late eighties with his pizza-parlour fortune from Canada, he plugged into the nationalist revival.

His money and contacts were deployed to bankroll the 1990 election victory of President Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union party. He was rewarded with the defence portfolio and turned his fundraising skills to building an army. The fruits are now in evidence.

MATE GRANIC, Croatian foreign minister: If Mr Susak embodies the hawkish right wing of the Tudjman ruling party with its sorry echoes of the Croatian Ustashe fascist movement that served the Nazis fanatically in the second world war, Mr Granic is the acceptable face of Croatian nationalism.

Like Mr Susak, a deputy chairman of the all-powerful party, Mr Granic enjoys a reputation for shrewd decency.

He has been a key influence in mitigating the excesses of Croatian nationalism and forging an alliance with Bosnia's Muslim leadership, and has been the main channel to the Americans and the Germans, Croatia's principal big-power allies.

The Susak-Granic team reflects Mr Tudjman's constant game of balancing power in Zagreb's ruling elite.

Zagreb victory with a sting in its tail

The Croatian assault on the Krajina may have checked the Serbs but the future depends on ethnic co-operation, writes **Martin Woollacott**

CROATIAN victories in the Krajina bring possibilities, good and bad, that are intertwined in the usual hellish Yugoslav way. One is for the progressive defeat of the rebel Serbs of Bosnia. Another is for further confirmation of the cruel absurdities of ethnic chauvinism. Yet another, not so new, is for the survival of the main author of the war through the expedient of sacrificing those he led into it.

A victory against the Serbs which is also a victory for ethnic cleansing, through the flight of Krajina Serbs to Bosnia, is not a victory to be relished. The check to the Serbs which was needed has been administered. For both military and psychological reasons, the path for the remaining illicit Serb state will be downhill. But from this point on there will be many choices, in Zagreb, in Sarajevo, even in Pale, which will either confirm the separation of the peoples of Yugoslavia or begin the painful process of restoring some elements of co-operation and even cohabitation. Similarly there will be decisions which either legitimise Slobodan Milosevic and make him into the pillar of the final peace that he wants to be or which, perhaps after a period of initial assurance, undermine him.

The advances in the Krajina have turned the conflict in former Yugoslavia into a two-front war. Since the lines were frozen in Croatia in 1992, the rebel Serbs have been able to concentrate their fire on the Bosnians, squeezing them from both sides, at earlier times with active Croatian help. Now they themselves are in the vice. Never again will the Bosnian Serbs be able to forget about the Croats while pouncing on the Muslims, or vice versa.

It is also true that the Serbs now have a more compact territory and that the addition to Ratko Mladic's general reserve of the regular elements of the Krajina forces makes up a big strike force. So the Serbs are both weaker and stronger, but nevertheless much more on the defensive than before.

The entry of the regular forces of Serbia into the equation would abruptly change this. But Slobodan Milosevic is not in the same situation as his old adversary, Franjo Tudjman. For Tudjman, going to war is the key to political dominance, giving him an unassailable lead over domestic opponents, ensuring victory in the next election. For Milosevic, *not* going to war is the key. His status in Serbia rests on his claim that he can keep the country out of trouble and out of a real war. That does not mean that he will not continue to push supplies and men over the borders, and that he may even increase them. But there are very clear limits to this covert support.

Croatia and Bosnia are allies, an agreement on full military co-operation having been signed only a few weeks ago. There is no reason why the Croatian forces should not at least go on to free completely the Bihac pocket, defeating the forces of the rogue Muslim leader, Fikret Abdic. They could go further. The extent of Croatian-Bosnian military and political co-operation in the future is one of the important decisions that touch on the central ethnic question: are we merely going to have a victory over the Serbs, or are we going to have some kind of victory over ethnic chauvinism as well? It would be silly to say that the first is not worthwhile without the second, but how much better to have both.

Just as important as the objective change in the military situation is the psychological change. It is difficult to over-emphasise how much the rebel Serbs have depended in their self-dramatisation on their success in war. High above the Adriatic, where the signs offering "Zimmer, Chambres, Rooms" swing in the breeze outside the shuttered *pensions*, the lands of the rebel Serbs begin, stretching hundreds of kilometres to the borders with Serbia proper. It is, in the main, poor country, made the poorer by its isolation from the prosperous coast and from most of the main industrial zones of central Bosnia.

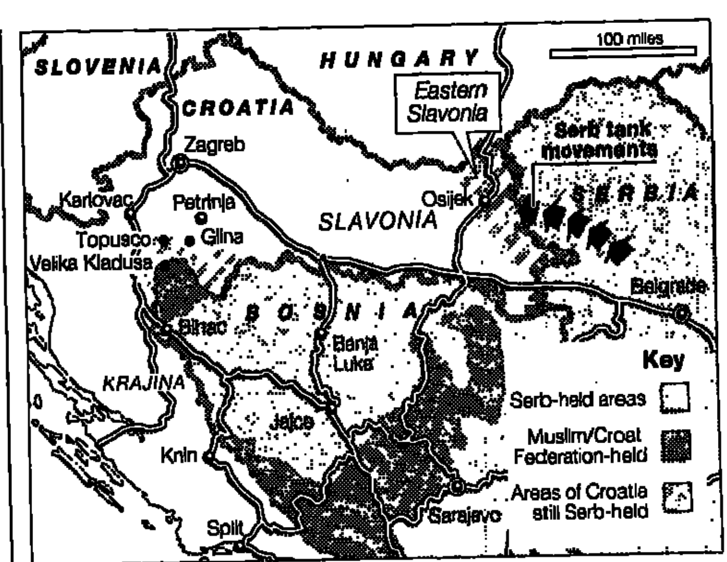
Of the pre-war population of 1.6 million in the two rebel republics, nearly half has left. The only industry worth the name is military. The principal male occupation is that of soldier. The towns are dismal, their factories at a standstill. Agriculture, deprived of fuel and fertiliser, has reverted to the era of the horse and the ox. This is the crippled realm into which the tanks of the Croatian army burst last weekend, puncturing the myth that, somehow, Serbian military prowess could make up for all these other deficiencies.

It is symptomatic that within a few hours of the Croatian attack, the leadership of the Bosnian Serb republic was embroiled in a crisis that would be comic if it did not involve some of the most brutal men in the Balkans. Radovan Karadzic and Mladic were at each others' throats at a moment of maximum danger for their people and for what they say is their cause. Nothing could better illustrate the truth that without military success the Serbs of Bosnia and Croatia have nothing — nothing, that is, except fear and guilt.

WE CAN see in these quarrels the hand of Milosevic, who appears to be using Mladic to try to unseat Karadzic, blaming the latter for the Krajina disasters, even though Mladic is undoubtedly more responsible for the failure there.

Milosevic's continual manipulation of the men he brought to power in the Serb rebel lands is only the latest indication of the utter cynicism with which he has behaved throughout.

The Krajina Republic, of which we already speak in the past tense, was in reality simply an extrusion of Serbian power into Croatian territory. The original "Greater Serbia" design had been to take the coast as well, but the Serbs fell short of that aim. What was left was a social and military cul-de-sac. The Krajina Serbs in a sense had the function of guarding the rear of the Bosnian Serb army, which busied itself with fighting the Muslims farther east. But even this function was essentially discharged not by the Krajina armed forces but by the simple fact that this was not an active front. Once the Serbs had been stopped, short of their coastal goal, the



United Nations forces came in and the area was largely quiet.

The Krajina was like a strut on an unfinished bridge. Once it was clear that the coast could not be reached, it was useless. The cynicism of Milosevic kept it in being while it appeared disadvantageous to dispose of it, and now it has disappeared because the Serbian president has a longer game in mind. Milosevic dropped the Krajina, and all 150,000 of its people. The same thing may happen soon to Karadzic or even to Mladic, and the ordinary Serbs of the Bosnian republic.

Today, as in the past, the singular flaw of western diplomacy remains its dependence on Milosevic. The trouble with the Croatian victory is that it may reinforce this dependence. Before that issue is tackled, however, the outside powers face another test. The UN could not bring about a wholesale return of the refugees to the Krajina. But it could try to halt the flight of those who remain, and it could organise the return of some who have already gone. Here the agencies will be caught between the Croats, some of whose extremists want no Serbs at all, and the Bosnian Serbs, half welcoming the reinforcements of men of military age that the Krajina fugitives represent.

The record is not good. The UN was deployed in early 1992 to demilitarise Serb-held areas and to help 200,000 Croats return. There was no demilitarisation — and no returns. This time it could be different, and it is worth saying that even if the numbers who stay or return are small, the effect can be large. Word gets back, perceptions change. In Western Slavonia, taken by the Croats earlier this year, the few Serbs who remain speak of correct behaviour in the daytime, of threats and harassment at night. Croatia may be triumphant but it is very open to pressure, in every area from continued arms supplies to its aspirations to join the EU. Surely the exodus of Serbs does not have to be accepted as a wholly irreversible *fait accompli*.

Jim Hoagland, page 17

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Chancellor haunted by plea for 'feel-good factor'

THE CHANCELLOR, Kenneth Clarke, is adamant that the Government is committed to containing inflation within its target rate of 2.5 per cent. To demonstrate that commitment, he decided last year to publish the minutes of his monthly monetary-policy meetings with the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George. The result has come to be a Ken versus Eddie battle over interest rates, which risks undermining the credibility of British monetary policy.

Mr George asked, in May, for a half-point rise in interest rates to contain inflationary pressure. The Chancellor refused. Most of the economic data published since then appears to suggest that the economy is slowing, that inflationary pressures are easing, and that Mr Clarke may have been right after all. But the Bank is insistent. In its quarterly Inflation Report last week, it warned that, by refusing a small but unpopular rise in interest rates now, the Government risked missing its inflation target and having to make a larger, more damaging, rise later.

Mr Clarke breezily shrugs off the disagreement as an "open and honest debate" over policy but is under pressure from many in his own party to make big — and almost certainly inflationary — tax cuts to win votes. That inflation has been kept low has had less to do with Government policy than job insecurity and weak consumer spending. This is now showing signs of picking up, and there are good grounds for wanting to guard against the inflationary boom that halted recovery from the last recession.

What Tory politicians want, however, is a return of the elusive "feel-good factor", the absence of which they blame for their electoral unpopularity. They believe that a dose of good old pre-election reflation could yet avert a Tory defeat at the polls. The Ken v Eddie battle may be an honest difference of economic opinion, but Ken has yet to show that his motives are not primarily political.

ALTHOUGH child murders are relatively few, the killing of four in a few days caused the nation to recoil in grief, anger and fear reminiscent of the Moors murders 30 years ago, which created the same sort of parental panic.

The horror stemmed largely from the fact that the murders happened in places of apparent safety or familiarity. Sophie Hook, aged 7, who was found dead on the beach at Llandudno in North Wales, had been sleeping with other children in a tent in the garden of her uncle's house. Robert Gee, 12, and his friend Paul Barker, 13, were stabbed to death while fishing in a pond near their homes at Eastham, Wirral. Darren Fawns, 13, was found battered in a scenic spot on the shore of Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland.

There were early arrests in the Llandudno and Wirral cases, and two men have been charged, but the Ulster police are still investigating.

A DRIVE against street robbery in London by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, has brought him into increasing conflict with immigrant groups, who fear that large numbers of young black men will be targeted.

Launching Operation Eagle Eye, Sir Paul said that 70 per cent of the victims of street robberies in the capital identified young black men as their assailants, and that 60 per cent of those arrested for street robberies were black. He was backed by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, who said that Sir Paul had "shown courage in facing up to this problem, and in listening to what victims are telling the police".

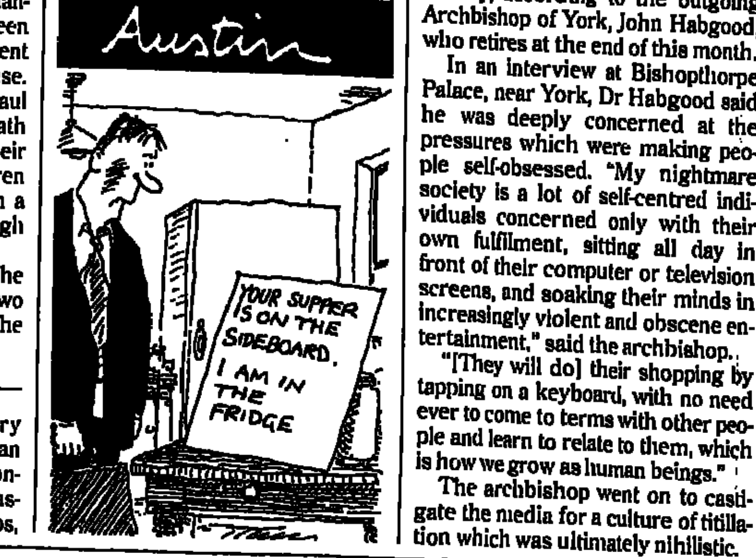
The operation will combine intelligence-gathering with the increased use of informants and video surveillance and opposition to bail for alleged muggers. But black groups, who organised a protest march, claim that their colour will single them out for stop-and-search operations.

HOT SUMMER days are no longer a cause for unqualified rejoicing. On the hottest day this summer — 34°C at London Heathrow — Britain found what Athens, Los Angeles and Bangkok have long discovered: sunlight and car exhausts produce a noxious cocktail. Concentrations of ground-level ozone broke World Health Organisation guidelines of between 50 and 76 parts per billion across the south of England and into Wales.

The Government could think of no quick fix other than to appeal to motorists to leave their cars at home. Motoring organisations said this was a pointless request to make of people who were no longer served by public transport. Anti-car protesters in London took more direct action and blockaded one of the city's main streets during the morning rush-hour.

Then came the wasps, seemingly a national plague of them, which exhausted shops' supplies of insect sprays. The native variety was augmented by the spread of a double-size "super wasp", thought to have come from France or Belgium. It originally colonised southern England but has been found this year as far north as Yorkshire.

As water consumption increased by up to 40 per cent, the use of hosepipes and sprinklers was banned over much of the country. Labour blamed the privatised water companies for leaking underground mains, mostly of Victorian origin, which lose at least a fifth of the total supply before it ever reaches consumers.



Riding the waves . . . The world's first sea-based power station, Osprey, was launched into the Clyde last week at a cost of £3.5 million. It converts ocean swell into electricity via an air-powered turbine and will feed up to two megawatts of power to the National Grid — enough for 2,000 homes PHOTO: MURDO...

School reports 'misleading'

Peter Kingston

SCHOOL reports are often not frank enough and give parents misleading and exaggerated impressions of their children's progress, according to a survey published on Monday by Ofsted, the national inspectorate.

Although standards of reports had improved over the past decade as teachers had devoted more time and attention to them, there was widespread confusion about how they should be written and what they were for.

Only a minority of reports issued by the 222 schools Ofsted visited in the nursery, primary and secondary sectors made clear what pupils needed to do to improve.

Some teachers packed in too much detail of what children had covered in the national curriculum, and reports were often laced with unfamiliar jargon and did not give clear assessments. They failed to distinguish between children's attainment — how they matched up to norms for the age group — and their achievement — how their work tallied with their individual capabilities.

"Many reports are unduly positive and fail to make constructive criticism. Such reports give the impression that attainment is much better than it is."

Teachers now spend from 30 to 100 hours a year on reporting. About 40 per cent of primary reports were good or very good while most secondary reports were of good quality. The rest varied widely.

Discussions at parents' meetings were generally helpful, but teachers often found it harder to be candid face-to-face than in writing. Secondary teachers tended to be more forthright about under-achievement and behavioural problems, and their plain speaking tended to be well received by parents.

A few schools used computers to turn out high quality reports. But when computers were used simply to string together lists of statements about pupils from a store of standard comments, the results were unsatisfactory.

Much of the confusion seemed to involve two recent measures: the record of achievement (RoA) and the national record of achievement (NRA). A third of primary and two-thirds of secondary schools compiled an RoA for each pupil, defined by the Department of Education as a "cumulative record of an individual child's all-round achievement". It was supposed to log "positive achievements", and the pupil should help compile it. Many schools used them as reports to parents.

Each pupil left school at 16 or so with an NRA, for which departmental guidance to teachers stressed the importance of positive reporting.

In a third of primary and secondary schools surveyed, there was good use of RoAs. But elsewhere teachers inferred from departmental guidance an "unsatisfactory view" that pupils should not be told anything what is wrong with their work.

Archbishop warns of 'devilish' Internet

Madeleine Bunting

THE Internet and the information revolution could become "devilish", ushering in a nightmare society, according to the outgoing Archbishop of York, John Habgood, who retires at the end of this month.

In an interview at Bishopthorpe Palace, near York, Dr Habgood said he was deeply concerned at the pressures which were making people self-obsessed. "My nightmare society is a lot of self-centred individuals concerned only with their own fulfilment, sitting all day in front of their computer or television screens, and soaking their minds in increasingly violent and obscene entertainment," said the archbishop.

"[They will do] their shopping by tapping on a keyboard, with no need ever to come to terms with other people and learn to relate to them, which is how we grow as human beings."

The archbishop went on to castigate the media for a culture of titillation which was ultimately nihilistic.

"There is plenty of scope for the media to clean up its act," he said. "Most of the sources of authority in society have been consistently undermined. That's not wholly a bad thing, but it's been done in a way which leaves people nothing to believe and no values.

The Church's role of moral leadership and its spiritual message have been hobbled by a media quick to ridicule, he said.

Dr Habgood has been involved in innumerable church and state tussles, most recently over tax breaks for married couples. More personally painful was the fierce criticism of his role in the row over the Crockford's Clerical Directory preface in 1987, which criticised the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, and led to the suicide of its author, Dr Gareth Bennett. Dr Habgood described the preface as a sour and vindictive outburst from a disappointed cleric.

More lightheartedly, he was accused of bringing down the wrath of God on York Minster when it was struck by lightening following his defence of the former Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, who questioned the virgin birth and the resurrection.

Over the next three years, 20 per cent of the Church's bishoprics will have changed hands, bringing in a new generation whom observers fear will mean a lower church profile.

A noticeable gap will be left by the departure of intellectuals such as Dr Habgood and Dr Jenkins — who retired last year — as well as experienced broadcasters such as the Bishop of Peterborough, Bill Westwood. There is concern that the departures will exacerbate a trend in the Church towards being preoccupied with itself as it tackles proposals to reform its organisation, finances and prayer book.

The bishops of St Albans, Winchester, Portsmouth and Derby are also due to retire and no one has been appointed to London to succeed David Hope, who moves to York.

Doctors to become whistleblowers

Patrick Wintour

THE NEW Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, on Monday announced plans to protect patients from incompetent doctors in a series of guidelines requiring doctors to report under-performance by hospital colleagues.

The much delayed announcement follows widespread concern about a string of blunders at hospitals. An inquiry in 1993 found that many doctors had been reluctant to report the suspected failings of their colleagues.

Mr Dorrell is determined to use the initiative as a springboard to establish himself as a more flexible and politically sensitive health secretary than his predecessor, Virginia Bottomley.

He confirmed that the obligation of doctors to report colleagues who are harming patients will be written into employment contracts.

Mr Dorrell said that the NHS reforms had come to be associated with bureaucracy rather than improving patient care.

He said his aim was to to take the NHS out of its ivory tower and into the community. "We have to demonstrate that the health service responds to the influence of the people who pay for it," he said.

"It is there to serve the patients of the NHS who are taxpayers. We have to make it more responsive to their views and their priorities."

Referring to the whistleblowing duties of doctors, he insisted that the new guidance should not be seen as government proposals to be imposed on the profession.

"The Chief Medical Officer has chaired a committee over the last few months which has produced a series of recommendations which will, I hope, give extra teeth and extra force to what has always been the commitment of the medical profession to ensure a continuing commitment to improved medical excellence."

The proposals will oblige doctors to report to their superiors worries about hospital colleagues who could be in danger of making blunders in diagnosis and treatment.

Dr Kenneth Calman, the Chief Medical Officer, conducted a review in 1993 after a scandal involving cervical cancer testing. More than 700 women had to be recalled when it was discovered that a general practitioner had been using incorrect sampling techniques for years.

A locum consultant, Samuel Kiberu, was suspended last month amid allegations that hundreds of patients' tissue samples may have been misdiagnosed.

Mr Dorrell said: "There is no higher priority in the health service than the maintenance and development of professional standards."

The secretary of the British Medical Association, Dr Mac Armstrong, said: "This is not something doctors welcome. But we have to recognise it is about improving patient care."

He said where mistakes occurred it was rarely due to malice on the doctor's part and was more usually the result of overwork, bad training, bad management or the doctor being ill.

Careful not to insult Mrs Bottomley, Mr Dorrell said his aim was to build on her legacy and not pursue radically different policies. But he promised to seek common ground with the Labour Party and to take the NHS out of the ivory tower of hospitals and into the community.

But the shadow health minister, Nick Brown, said: "Mr Dorrell is desperate to ditch Virginia Bottomley's legacy of appalling public relations, but he is just as out of touch as his predecessor when it comes to health policy."

Lib Dems to seek reforms

Patrick Wintour

SWEEPING reforms to the House of Commons to prevent the blocking of the opposition parties' constitutional reform programme are to be proposed by the Liberal Democrats next month.

The reforms, including allowing legislative stages of bills to continue from one parliament to the next, are seen by Liberal Democrat leaders as necessary to ensure the passage of Labour's heavy constitutional reform programme, including a Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, and the abolition of the vote for hereditary peers.

A Liberal Democrat working party is also likely to propose ending the practice of constitutional bills being debated in full by all MPs on the floor of the House instead of in a committee.

Archy Kirkwood, the Liberal Democrat chief whip, said on Sunday: "Parliament's current procedures, including the Standing Orders, make it possible for a dozen determined guerrillas on the Conservative side to stop constitutional reform in its tracks. Procedure is absolutely crucial to all this."

He suggested that the practice under which bills were killed off if they were not completed in one annual parliament should be ended, so that half-completed bills could be handed on from one Queen's Speech to the next.

The working party is also likely to examine ways of restoring Parliament's power to scrutinise the executive; end archaic practices; restore powers to backbenchers to enact legislation; and call for proper funding of third parties at Westminster.

It may also suggest that each year a fixed number of Private Members' Bills should be given guaranteed government time, so preventing ministers killing backbenchers' bills for which there is majority support.

Other proposals are likely to include ministers being required to answer departmental questions regularly in committees, as well as on the floor of the House, and disclosure of MPs' outside earnings.

The Liberal Democrats are already committed, in the context of its support for devolution and proportional representation, to a reduction in the number of MPs to 450.

The reformers hope that the working party will catch the all-party mood of disenchantment with the Commons.

EC cools waiters' ardour

Daniel John

AMOROUS hotel staff who find it hard keeping their eyes on the job and their hands off the guests will have more than a manager to contend with the next time a complaint is made. In what is believed to be a landmark ruling, two British holidaymakers have won damages of £3,100 from a tour operator in a British court after they alleged they were sexually harassed by waiters at a Tunisian hotel.

The women, whose identities have been kept secret by their solicitors, used a clause in a European Commission directive which allows holidaymakers to sue companies for personal injury,

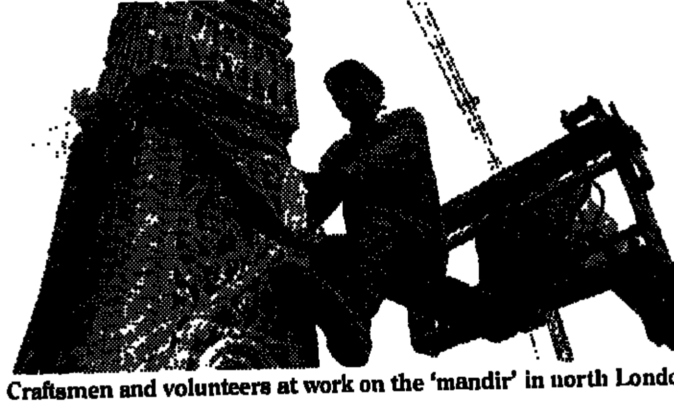
Details of the case emerged for the first time last week. The two women, a 33-year-old from Whitefield, north Manchester, and her 21-year-old niece, of nearby Blackley, told a court that they suffered persistent sexual harassment from the waiters in February 1993.

Solicitors used a clause in the EC directive on package travel against the unnamed tour operator.

The clause, first drawn up by the Association of British Travel Agents and incorporated into the travel industry's code of conduct in 1990, was designed to cover negligence, such as coach drivers who cause accidents while drunk. The directive means legal action can be pursued in the holidaymaker's own country.

The tour company in the Tunisia case contested the action, brought by Manchester-based solicitors Linder Myers, but the judge ruled that the women had suffered psychological trauma. The aunt received £2,200 and her niece £900.

Andrew McBride, litigation partner at Linder Myers, said he believed that many other women would now consider bringing similar actions.



Craftsmen and volunteers at work on the 'mandir' in north London

Perfection comes to Neasden

Madeleine Bunting

HUNDREDS of craftsmen helped by volunteers are working day and night to finish the biggest Hindu temple to be built outside India before its official opening later this month.

The white marble domes and pinnacles dominate the skyline of suburban streets in Neasden, north London, testimony to the remarkable determination of Britain's 20,000 followers of the Swaminarayan Hindu movement, who first conceived the project 15 years ago.

What Canterbury is to Anglicans and Westminster Cathedral to Roman Catholics, Neasden will become to Britain's 1.3 million Hindus. But the followers of Guru Pujya Pramukh Swami Maharaj hope that tourists will also come to marvel at a building they believe rivals the Taj Mahal.

The cost, which runs into millions of pounds, has been met through donations, primarily from the Gujarati community in Britain and India, but also through projects such as collecting 7 million aluminium cans for recycling.

More than a thousand volunteers — students, pensioners, accountants, postmen — are helping builders and craftsmen from India as they assemble the carved marble and wood. Among the workmen are orange-robed monks called saints; some are qualified engineers and they ensure that every part of the mandir (temple) is built according to principles set down in ancient Hindu scriptures.

No steel has been used because it might attract magnetic fields which would interfere with meditation. The temple has the only cantilevered dome in the UK not to rely on steel.

At the peak, 1,526 craftsmen were involved, 100 volunteers and more than 1,000 part-time volunteers.

The seven-domed mandir, as the house of God, should be perfect, explained Amrish Patel, the project co-ordinator. According to brochures published for the opening, it is "a creation so accurate in dimension, so perfect in rhythm, so beautiful in form and so charged in spirit that it bridges man with God and the whole cosmos".

Beside the mandir is a complex which will provide accommodation for 10 saints, a huge conference hall, sports facilities and kitchens capable of feeding several thousand during festivals.

Several idols will be installed in the temple after being taken on decorated floats from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square on August 18. One is a sculpture of the Guru — the fifth spiritual successor of Lord Swaminarayan who founded the movement in the last century — whom his followers believe to be divine.

It was on the Guru's order that planning first began in 1980 to build the mandir near an existing temple. He has made all the key decisions on its design and location. It is not yet clear whether he will be fit enough to travel from India to attend the week of opening ceremonies.

Treatment of asthma costs £450m

Rebecca Smithers and Chris Mihill

ASTHMA is fast becoming "the modern epidemic" and will soon cost the National Health Service as much to treat as smoking-related diseases, according to figures released last week.

At least £450 million was spent treating asthma in 1994, including a 20 per cent increase in prescriptions to £381 million, against £610 million spent on smokers.

Over £1 million is spent every day on NHS asthma medication in England alone, and the cost of treating asthma is likely to escalate as an increasing number of people are affected.

The Liberal Democrat health spokesman, Alex Carlile, said that pollution from transport was a major factor in increasing levels of asthma. "Asthma is fast becoming the modern epidemic," said Mr Carlile. "Research is essential if there is to be any chance of getting it under control."

Surface transport accounts for nearly one-quarter of Britain's greenhouse gas emissions, and the Liberal Democrats will this week unveil a transport policy which will focus on ways of reducing harmful emissions.

The party will propose more rigorous emission tests as part of the MoT, and the fitting of catalysts and filters to older vehicles. Its proposals will include cutting tax for cars up to 1,500cc.

In Britain, the number of children with asthma has doubled over the past 15 to 20 years, although the reasons for this are not understood.

More than 2 million people in Britain suffer from asthma and the disease kills 2,000 a year. Although much concern has focused recently on the possible role of pollution and poor air quality in triggering asthma, respiratory specialists are divided on whether this is a basic cause of the illness.

A variety of possible reasons have been put forward as to why asthma should be increasing. It could be a combination of factors, including air pollution, cigarette smoking, house-dust mites, changes in agriculture to produce different pollens, a decline in breast feeding, or a poor diet short in fruit and vegetables.

There is growing evidence of the link between the house-dust mite and asthma. Other theories point to cigarette smoking as the cause, with the immune system of babies being weakened if mothers smoke during pregnancy.

A study published in October last year by the National Asthma Campaign said one child is admitted to hospital every 10 minutes because of asthma. It said the number of cases had doubled over the past 15 years and that one in seven schoolchildren now suffers the disease.

Although asthma is highly debilitating, with more than 8 million schooldays lost each year as result, studies suggest that two-thirds of children will grow out of the illness.

Last week Mr Carlile criticised government policy as shortsighted. He said he would be stepping up pressure on ministers "to identify and treat the causes of asthma, as opposed to relying on treating the symptoms, as more and more people suffer".

Kashmir row 'could cost 30 seats'

Patrick Wintour

A DELEGATION of Labour MPs urged the shadow foreign secretary, Robin Cook, to make an unambiguous statement in support of Kashmir's right to self-determination or face the possible loss of 30 marginal seats at the next election.

Max Madden, the Labour MP for Bradford West, gave his warning after Mr Cook caused a furore in the British Pakistani community over newspaper reports in India and the British Asian press which claimed Mr Cook had said Kashmir, where five western hostages are being held, is part of the Indian state and an internal matter for India.

However, Paramjit Bahia, secretary of the British Indian Councillors Association, urged Mr Cook to "stand firm against the blackmail of those claiming that 500,000 Pakistanis will turn against Labour over Kashmir. He should face them straight in the eye."

The controversy has blown up at a time when nine constituency Labour parties with largely ethnic populations have tabled conference resolutions calling for fresh UN and Commonwealth negotiations over the future of Kashmir based on the principle of self-determination for its people.

Mr Cook was reported to have put Labour policy into doubt at a meeting with 500 Indian community leaders last week. However, Mr Cook's office claimed his remarks, given front page treatment in India, had been misinterpreted.

Mr Bahia, one of the organisers of last week's meeting, said: "Mr Cook had merely stated Labour policy, which is that Kashmir de facto is part of India and that the issue must be resolved by peaceful means in negotiations between the Indian and Pakistan governments."

He added: "Some people are trying to hijack Labour policy by issuing empty threats that half a million Pakistanis will turn against Labour over Kashmir. That is not true. We should vote on many issues, including the party with the best policy for jobs. There are a million Indians living in Britain and I would not tolerate threats about how we might vote."

Mr Madden said: "Traditionally the Kashmiri people have been extremely loyal to the Labour Party, and they could have a decisive role to play in 30 marginal seats in the Midlands and North-east."

● Tony Blair, the Labour leader, and his deputy John Prescott were given the mildest of rebukes last week for breaching Commons rules by failing to declare free trips in the register of MPs' interests.

The all-party Select Committee on Members' Interests said : "We do not consider that either case constitutes a sufficiently serious breach of the rules to warrant further action by the House."

Both men had argued that their trips had been undertaken in their capacity as frontbench spokesmen.

The main complaint against Mr Blair was that he failed to declare an expenses-paid visit on Concorde to Washington in 1986, when as Labour's junior Treasury spokesman he took part in a semi-official all-party delegation to press against US tax changes.

Michael Grylls, the Tory MP who led the delegation, also failed to register the trip.

The Tory-controlled committee found "there was doubt among the MPs concerned about the status of the visit; one MP registered it, while the other two did not."

The committee also found that Mr Prescott should have registered a weekend for two at Gleneagles Hotel, Tayside, last year to attend a seminar sponsored by the oil company Conoco.

Making a general ruling to MPs, the committee said: "Provided that the benefit in question arises out of membership of the House and is paid for by a third party, it makes no difference whether its principal purpose is work or registration."

In Brief

NEW RULES drawn up by the Government will bar charities from claiming state cash for projects already receiving substantial funding from the National Lottery. The ruling could cost the charities millions and create a dilemma of whether to bid for government cash or apply to the National Lottery.

IN THE three months to the end of June, 11,860 operations were cancelled by hospitals in England on the day of admission.

SLOUGH Labour Party has ended its resistance to drawing up a women-only short-list to choose its parliamentary candidate, but is likely to signal its resentment by picking a fierce opponent of women-only lists.

PARENTS of schoolchildren are far happier with the state education system than the wider public, according to a Mori opinion poll. About eight in 10 are satisfied with the service at primary and secondary levels, compared with 53 per cent of the general population who are positive about primary schools and 44 per cent about secondaries.

FUNDHOLDING GPs have been paid more than £200 million in management and computer allowances since the controversial scheme began, according to Alan Milburn, the Labour MP for Darlington.

THE QUALITY of water in rivers and canals in England and Wales has improved 26 per cent in the past four years.

THE EMERGENCY phone network for police, fire and ambulance services was sold off too cheaply by the Home Office, according to a National Audit Office report.

A TRAIN driver who became haunted by fears of being killed by an oncoming train after the Cowden crash last year, has been jailed for a year for abandoning passengers on an express after he drew to a halt outside a station and walked off.

BRIGID BROPHY, the award-winning writer and champion of rights for women, animals and authors, has died after a 12-year struggle against multiple sclerosis. She was 66.

THE ENGLAND rugby union captain, Will Carling, has decided not to sue the News of the World over claims he had enjoyed "secret trysts" with the Princess of Wales.

THE FOOTBALLER Ryan Giggs and Mick Jagger's daughter, Jade, have been revealed as the latest personalities to influence parents choosing names for their children. Both names entered their respective top 10 for the first time this year.

Britain's refugee record 'less than generous'

Alan Travis

THE Home Secretary, Michael Howard, was on Monday accused of giving a false impression that Britain has a generous record in taking refugees from the former Yugoslavia.

Aid agencies welcomed the Government's decision to admit 500 refugees from Croatia.

However, immigration welfare organisations disputed Mr Howard's claim that Britain had acted equally generously in the past.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees last week asked 30 countries to give shelter to 5,000 people. The United States announced on Monday that it would take 2,500.

Mr Howard said that those who described Britain's response as "less than generous" when compared with the 350,000 refugees accepted by Germany had completely misunderstood the position.

He said that the move "underlines our continuing commitment to assist those in danger and facing persecution as a result of this tragic conflict". He added: "We remain at the forefront of the international community's efforts to provide humanitarian aid.

"Over the last three years about 160,000 people from former Yugoslavia have come to this country under one category or another.

"About 12,600 have actually applied for asylum, another 2,000 have been admitted under special arrangements for particularly vulnerable persons.

"The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees described Britain's action over this last week as very generous," Mr Howard said.

But Claude Moraes of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants said Mr Howard had "given a false impression to the public that Britain had somehow been generous" in taking people from the former Yugoslavia.

He added that it was ludicrous to compare the figure of 160,000 people from the former Yugoslavia who had entered Britain in the last three years with the 350,000 who had been given "temporary protection" in Germany. Detailed figures for 1992 and 1993 show that most of the 160,000 were tourists, business people and students on short stay visits, not refugees from the war.

Refugee Council figures show that there are only about 11,000 people from the former Yugoslavia who have applied for asylum in the UK so far, of whom 2,000 have had their applications dealt with. Only 25 have been granted full refugee status.

A new visa regime at the end of 1992 led to a fall in the number of former Yugoslavs seeking temporary refuge in Britain, down to 1,830 in 1993 and to 1,390 last year.



Lisa Clayton at the helm of her boat, which she sailed solo around the world and without assistance. Despite rumours scoffing at her claim she is confident her record can be proved PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN HATTON

Open prisons threatened

Alan Travis

THE days of Britain's open prisons are numbered because there are too few inmates who can be trusted not to abscond, an internal Prison Service strategy report says.

Prison Service planners say a sharp rise in the number of prisoners convicted of violent offences, combined with recent problems with drugs and absconding at open prisons, means their future role must be questioned.

The first open prison was built at New Hall Camp, near Wakefield, in 1933 and there are now 11 jails which hold category D inmates who can reasonably be trusted not to escape.

"They provide facilities that enable long-term prisoners reaching the end of their sentences, including former life sentence prisoners, to better adjust to outside conditions on release. The other category of prisoner could be generally classified as the non-violent offender, including those convicted of white collar crimes," says the report.

The rise in the number of inmates convicted of violent offences has already led to a £7 million programme to improve security at category C prisons by adding metal cladding to their external fences.

But Harry Fletcher of the National Association of Probation Officers questions whether ending the traditional role of open prisons will cut crime. "Despite the rise in the number of violent prisoners, open conditions are still essential if rehabilitative work is to be effective.

● Prison makes inmates leaner and fitter than the general population, according to the first national survey of prisoners' health.

They have lower blood pressure, are less likely to be overweight or obese and take more exercise than most men, despite high levels of smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, says the study for the Prison Service Health Care Directorate.

US embassy staff face tax bill

THREE hundred British employees at the US embassy in Grosvenor Square in London could face a bill for back taxes of £2 million between them unless the State Department in Washington can square things with the Inland Revenue, *writes Seumas Milne.*

For 30 years, the embassy has been "under-reporting" its British staff's salaries to the Inland Revenue so that the employees could save on income tax. Now the Revenue has got to hear about the embassy fiddle.

The embassy has argued that the State Department should pay and there has been talk of a staff walkout if employees are asked to foot the bill themselves. An embassy spokesman said the mood of its British staff was one of "concern", rather than "panic".

One US source has described the Grosvenor Square tax bomb as a "delicate tax triangle", which is providing lawyers on both sides of the Atlantic with rich pickings from the international liability and reporting issues it has thrown up.

Financial fixer

Lord Lever of Manchester

HAROLD LEVER, the former Labour Cabinet minister and economic adviser to Harold Wilson and James Callaghan during Labour's 1970s administrations, has died aged 81.

He was a maverick politician on or off the platform, a top-class bridge player and a financial adept (he became seriously rich himself). His approach to economic policy was that of a market-watcher rather than an economist, and to politics and Parliament that of a highly gifted, if versatile, amateur. His flair was for the spectacular coup, rather than the long hard road. Sometimes it succeeded.

A millionaire resident of Eaton Square, Belgravia, he was remembered on Sunday by Tony Benn, his Labour Cabinet colleague, as "a very clever, popular, jolly and entertaining man — a bit like having Dennis Skinner in Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet". He recalled one Cabinet meeting in which a permanent secretary's salary was being agreed and Lord Lever intervened to say: "I would not pay my cook as little as that."

Very much a Manchester man, Harold was born into a Jewish family, went to Manchester Grammar School and Manchester University. After being called to the Bar in 1935, he won the Manchester Exchange seat for Labour in 1945, and remained an MP for various Manchester constituencies until 1979 (despite challenges from left-wingers), when he became a life peer.

In government for the first time in 1967 as junior minister at George Brown's Department of Economic Affairs, and Financial Secretary to the Treasury from 1969-70, Harold followed his natural bent for inspired solutions to stubborn dilemmas and parliamentary coups d'état. If at times he brushed aside — not always skilfully — departmental conventions and accepted rules of administrative law and order, he could at a pinch rescue a beleaguered government from a House of Commons fiasco by an irresistibly original and sparkling oration.

Harold Wilson perceptively appointed him to fringe posts such as Paymaster General (1969-70), and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1974-79), and sent him on ad hoc missions to unravel awkward financial and legal tangles at home and abroad. This was a wiser use of his talents than to have faced him with the grinding daily struggle for administrative efficiency.

Lever, for example, was the architect of the Chrysler rescue in 1975, when the Labour government, in a last-minute volte-face, came up with £160 million for the almost-doomed American-owned company. He was also put in charge of negotiating with oil companies for a stake in North Sea oil. A champion of small businesses, at a time when Labour had little good to say about that sector, Lever argued that such a source of wealth creation could be linked to wider social objectives.



Harold Lever, as good at bridge as he was in business

He was a director of the Guardian and Manchester Evening News from 1979 until 1990, a member of the Court of Manchester University from 1975 and a governor of the London School of Economics.

His absence from the House of Lords through ill-health was much regretted, for when Harold Lever spoke, in one House or the other, people listened.

Douglas Jay

Harold Lever, Labour politician, born January 15, 1914; died August 6, 1995

Light of independence

Ida Lupino

IDA LUPINO, who has died of cancer, aged 77, was the only woman film director in Hollywood in the fifties — and only one of a handful that the industry has seen since. Lupino was only able to direct by forming her own company, for which she made low-key, low-budget movies with strong female leads. Her best work as an actress came in similar films, in which she often played women searching for love but settling for independence.

A descendant of a theatrical family of Italian origin, she was born in Brixton, south London, the daughter of celebrated comedian Stanley Lupino and actress Connie Emerald. She was at drama school when director Allan Dwan, who was auditioning her mother for a part in the film Her First Affaire, decided to cast the 14-year-old Ida instead.

But it was her portrayal of the lowly London prostitute Bessie Broke in The Light That Failed (1939) that brought her to stardom. Her emotionally charged performance won her a contract with Warner Bros, who offered more meaty roles to women than any other studio.

The first for Warners was Raoul Walsh's They Drive By Night (1940), in which she made an impact as a woman who kills her husband to be free to marry George Raft, only to find he intends to marry another. It set the pattern for a number of all-stops-out performances Lupino gave in the forties.

But Lupino was also capable of much subtlety and sensitivity, no more so than in Walsh's High Sierra (1941), at the climax of which she watches as her lover, ageing gangster Humphrey Bogart, is shot down by the police and then exclaims: "He's free! He's free!"

However, by the end of the forties, with several more successes under her belt, Lupino expressed her dissatisfaction with her acting career as, in her own words, "the poor man's Bette Davis". So, with her second husband, Columbia executive Collier Young, she set up her own company. Their first venture was Not Wanted (1949), a well-meaning tale of an unmarried mother. When the director had a heart attack three days into shooting, Lupino took over.

She directed a further five films in a no-frills, punchy manner, though the intrinsic feminist themes were somewhat diluted. Outrage (1950) bravely confronted the sensitive subject of rape. The best were The Bigamist and The Hitch-Hiker, both with wonderfully sweaty performances from Edmond O'Brien.

Ida Lupino made only occasional appearances in features after turning her back on film acting in 1956, notably as Steve McQueen's mother in Sam Peckinpah's Junior Bonner (1972), still expressing the intensity that made her famous.

Ronald Bergan

Ida Lupino, actress, screenwriter, director and producer, born February 4, 1918; died August 3, 1995

When shall we ever learn?

THE ETERNAL flame in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park will be extinguished when nuclear weapons have been abolished across the world. Does that mean that it will burn for ever? To contemplate this paradox is to plunge into the moral haze of the nuclear age in which the world has been cloaked for 50 years. New and more terrible weapons were piled higher in order, so it was said, that they might not be used. The world was supposed to be a safer place but generations lived under the shadow of the bomb. It is only in the last few years that this shadow has shortened. The nuclear menace has been shoved to one side with the end of the cold war, give or take an uneasy twinge about proliferation.

It is easier to look back than forwards and it has also been easier to focus on Japan rather than the West in remembering Hiroshima. Yet the themes of apology and forgiveness are not exclusive to the bomb. Japan's reluctance to acknowledge fully its war guilt, and western reluctance to admit to what may also constitute war crimes, would be problems whatever happened in Hiroshima (and in mostly forgotten Nagasaki). It may be disappointing that the Japanese prime minister failed on Sunday to acknowledge the wider suffering inflicted by his country on so many millions. Many Japanese critics of the atom bomb still feel that their government has missed a chance for reconciliation. Many Japanese officials understand very well how much damage is done by timid politicians to their country's reputation. The incomplete transformation of Japan after the war (in which US anti-communist zeal played a large part) still inhibits Japanese politics today.

Dropping the bomb was intended in part to impress the Soviet Union and prevent or minimise the effect of Moscow's own intervention against Japan. It was also seen as a probable means of curtailing more bloody months of final conflict — though the estimates of the number of lives thereby saved were no more than guesses. There was the military zeal to see, simply, if it worked, and to justify the expenditure of $2 billion. There was the vengeance displayed in the White House proclamation that Japan had now been "repaid manyfold" for the deceit of Pearl Harbour. Most of all, there was the readiness to target whole civilian populations which had already been shown from Dresden to Tokyo.

Beyond past history, Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked the start of a new argument concerning nothing less than the future of the world. That argument should not be shelved because the world has earned what may yet only be temporary respite. The nuclear deterrent, by its immensity of terror, may have been more likely to "work" than any previous accumulation of supposedly overwhelming force. But deterrence theory, though not devoid of rationality, cannot be immune from the logic of all arms races. Weapons which are designed to be used may eventually be used, whether by accident or miscalculation, whether preemptively or in ill-thought retaliation. The use of nuclear weapons was actaully threatened several times, particularly against China. We have only recently grasped how close Khrushchev's adventurism in Cuba brought the world to nuclear war. US provocations to test Soviet air defences might easily have gone beyond the brink on more than one occasion — not to mention the infamous flocks of geese and new moons which triggered false radar warnings. Fail-safe technology depended on split-second timing: four minutes' warning became a generous estimate. Defenders of deterrence said that nuclear war could only be launched by "some madman" — but how could sanity be guaranteed? We forget too easily in the post-cold war age the new arms race of the 1970s and early 1980s which multiplied the nuclear threat by so many times. In the prospect of nuclear winter, it was no longer possible to predict even that "many will survive". Yet the spread of theatre weapons increased at the same time the danger that limited war might seem achievable.

The world did not after all self-destruct in these anxious decades, thanks to a combination of prudence, good fortune and public pressure. The persistent and often derided efforts of those campaigning against the bomb imposed significant limits on nuclear lunacy. A climate was created where — as President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan acknowledged — peace could win votes and progress in limiting nuclear tests, and restricting weapons could be defended more effectively against the hawks. But no nuclear arms *reductions* were agreed until the cold war had ended. The passion of the anti-nuclear critics had more effect than their logic. For the more triumphalist strategists, the deterrent theory actually seemed to be strengthened by the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

Einstein once said that "the splitting of the atom has changed everything except our ways of thinking". There has still been no real revolution of strategic thinking to match the deep cuts now finally under way. Under great pressure at this year's Non-Proliferation Treaty renewal conference, the five nuclear-weapons powers agreed to accept the "ultimate goal" of eliminating those weapons. No one yet takes this goal seriously. As their testing programmes show the real priority of the nuclear five is to ensure a nuclear capability which can survive a Comprehensive Test Ban. On Sunday, the mayor of Hiroshima argued that "as long as nuclear weapons exist . . . some country, at some point, will experience the horror." What has to be rethought is the whole concept of nation states defending themselves by weapons of mass, indiscriminate and inhumane destruction. As first proposed by the scientists who protested in 1945, the only solution is to establish a regime by which all such weapons — not just those of putative "rogue" states — will be placed under international control. Britain, the disarmers used to say in the 1960s, should offer itself as a model by surrendering its nuclear weapons to a global authority. The idea may have been unrealistic in the fragile temper of the cold war: today there is no nuclear balance left to "disturb". In a world where our soldiers have become peacekeepers, is there any argument for keeping the bomb except that we already have it?

A deepening human tragedy

CROATIA's ferocious attack on Krajina was a desperately dangerous act, but hardly unexpected. For the past two years and more, President Tudjman has been building up Croatia's armed forces to a strength far beyond anything the country had when it broke away from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991. It now has a standing army larger than Britain's. Its arms have all been acquired in bare-faced violation of the UN arms embargo against all former Yugoslav republics, and with the UN Security Council turning a blind eye.

Now Russia, Britain and France are loudly calling "foul" over Croatia's blitzkrieg on Krajina. They believe that military intervention in Krajina carries the risk of drawing in the Serbian national forces and widening the conflict in former Yugoslavia. They also fear a new, unmanageable avalanche of refugees — with nowhere to go except Serb-Bosnian-held Bosnia.

These things will undoubtedly have to be faced if the worst eventualities occur, but it is cynical and far too late to voice such fears. There had already been a dress-rehearsal in May, when Croatia swiftly took Western Slavonia, one of the smaller Serb enclaves. The UN peacekeeping force — almost 15,000 strong in Croatia — had stood by passively then, as now. Mr Tudjman blames Unprofor for failing to keep its bargain to demilitarise the Serb enclaves, and considers himself free to re-establish Croatian sovereignty.

The US and Germany have been far more muted in their response to President Tudjman's actions than the other three members of the "contact group". In view of their respective records throughout the Yugoslav crisis, this is hardly surprising. They calculate that Mr Tudjman is taking some of the pressure off Bosnia, certainly where Bihac is concerned. And they do not discount the possibility that, far from widening the war, the battle for Krajina could trigger a decisive shake-up of the military and political constellation in former Yugoslavia, open the way to a redrawing of the map, and bring about the settlement that has so far eluded the endless diplomatic efforts.

In a situation where the outside powers lack common purpose, and none of the parties directly involved in the conflict really say what they mean, or mean what they say, there is no way of predicting the outcome of the latest twists of the Balkan conflict — except that the outside powers are more divided, and more powerless than ever to negotiate a settlement; and that the human tragedy is becoming ever more deep.

French fallout from staunch nuclear club

Hugo Young

IT IS not true that Margaret Thatcher, when forced to choose between Anglo-Saxons and Europeans, always favoured kith and kin. Some things could make her very European. One of these was what she called "the nuclear".

Ten years ago, when the world was outraged by the French sinking of Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior in a New Zealand harbour, she came under pressure to criticise President Mitterrand and his agents. The Foreign Office murmured a few regrets, but the Prime Minister fiercely refused to say a word. It was one of those non-happenings that are little noticed yet often constitute the most significant decisions. Unwilling to denigrate France for defending its own nuclear programme against Greenpeace, Mrs Thatcher was also enraged by New Zealand's exclusion, under a socialist Prime Minister, David Lange, of US nuclear vessels from ports they had traditionally used.

The nuclear club, in other words, imposed its own solidarities. So it does today. They are overbearing, as President Chirac shows. He invites us to believe, as did Mrs Thatcher, that the nuclear option has to be sustained against all objections, especially those that presume upon elementary accountability. Nuclear decision-making, you see, is secret. To challenge nuclear testing is to invade the innermost prerogatives of a national leader. Chirac, the Elysée says in lordly fashion, has made an "irrevocable" decision to start new tests in the South Pacific within the next month.

Irrevocable it may be, but it is already a diplomatic disaster. France's contribution to the 50th anniversary of Hiroshima will haunt her for years. It plays to Chirac's desire to show himself a leader. Looking across the world, from Washington to London to Moscow, he sees compromise and indecision all around.

The tests at Mururoa are a colonialist act. The territory may be French, but the sensibilities France insults are as far from the motherland as geography allows. Like the poor colonist she always was, France failed to predict the natives' objections, and still behaves as though they are incomprehensible. But the loser, it is already clear, is Paris. South Asia is enraged. Japan is horrified. Australia is taking a commendably rigorous line. The choice by a European power to invade the Pacific Ocean to conduct its perilous experiments is seen by all those who rim that ocean as an insufferable anachronism.

But that is not the only time-warp. The French reason for conducting the tests is widely discredited. This is true of the tests themselves, about which experts are unable to agree that they are essential to the efficiency of the French weapon, or to the capacity to conduct computerised simulations in place of real tests under the coming Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. But the larger doubt concerns the very process of nuclear modernisation. At whom, in the real world, will these weapons ever be directed? There is no longer a clear putative candidate. For the truth, one does better to fall back on the grandiloquence of the French defence minister, Charles Millon: "I want the French people and foreigners to understand that this is a sovereign act which will enable France to remain a great power."

That statement involves a complexity of assumptions. They are not altogether incorrect. We should know, because Britain makes the identical claim. Britain's response to Chirac's imperious decision has been, of necessity, muted. How could Britain, which has completed — or been forced by the American moratorium to pretend it has completed — its own tests in Nevada, say France had no right to do what the club members agree a nuclear power needs to do if it is to continue to be taken seriously? Side by nuclear side, France and Britain have a common interest in maintaining their nuclear relevance as a way of ensuring, for example, that their entry ticket to top tables like the UN Security Council is not captured by the European Union.

Britain contends that it is neutral as regards French policy. It did not join Austria, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands who broke with France at the Cannes EU summit and made a formal protest to Chirac. Equally Britain doesn't want to antagonise Australia and other Pacific countries who were helpful in getting the Non-Proliferation Treaty made permanent, the one shiningly positive event in world diplomacy this year. But Britain, at bottom, is caught in the French embrace.

ONE PRODUCT of this may, eventually, be some advance on the tentative conversations already held about Anglo-French co-operation in nuclear weaponry. Could an Anglo-French bomb constitute the future Euro-deterrent? Over decades rather than years, domestic political pressures may push American strategic doctrine in directions which make that prospect more real. The vested interest of the nuclear lobby, where industry, the military, the MoD and successive ministers form a critical mass of power, will always be very hard to resist.

The Mururoa outrage, however, could have a different outcome, as catalyst for the debate that has studiously not taken place since the strategic shape of the world was undone in 1989. The criticism vented by Australia and Japan, not to mention Greenpeace, is said by France to be perverse. Why now? And what about China's testing? Well, China's tests, though harder to decipher, have been strongly criticised too. But "why now?" is a silly question. What France, and Britain, should be forced to confront is the common disbelief, after the crack-up of the Soviet Union, in the threat to national security that justifies the appalling environmental aggression which is about to be visited on the mid-Pacific.

Mururoa asks that question with a venom its perpetrators did not anticipate. It is a folly that has comprehensively backfired on President Chirac. But it gives vast attention to issues that nuclear leaders have been pleased to see dozily ignored. What CND failed to dent during the cold war, could Mururoa begin to break apart now that it's over?

Le Monde

Setting a dangerous precedent

President Chirac's hasty changes to the Republic's constitution spell danger for parliament, warns **Jean-Marie Colombani**

FRANÇOIS Mitterrand used to say: "[French] institutions were dangerous before me: they will be dangerous after me."

The Elysée's last incumbent made the observation when he noted the many failings of the Fifth Republic's constitution. He concluded it needed amending, but in the end did nothing about it.

Jacques Chirac refused to be drawn on the constitution during the presidential campaign except to promise he would hold a referendum on educational reform. His presidential opponent, Lionel Jospin, pleaded for urgent reform, but Chirac countered with a simple and powerful argument — the French have other things on their mind, in particular unemployment.

Yet Chirac began his presidential term by reforming the constitution. From now on Chirac will be able to call referendums when he likes on any issue — political, social and economic — and get his way over parliament's head. He began by calling an early referendum on school reform.

The government rightly proclaims that it is the most important amendment since 1962, when General de Gaulle got the French people to approve the election of their president by direct universal suffrage.

No one doubts Chirac's republican instincts or suspects that the institutions under him will become dangerous. However, since the government is talking about the momentous character of the change it is introducing, the question is whether institutions could become more dangerous after his presidency.

More precisely, does the key element of the amendment — extending the referendum's field of application beyond the reach of the Constitutional Council — modify the nature of the regime for better or for worse?

Since 1962, the Fifth Republic has tended to become increasingly monarchic and less and less republican. The most convincing condemnation of this trend came from Chirac himself before the presidential election.

Instead of matching words with deeds, he is strengthening the system's defects by adding to presidential prerogatives. Not only has the referendum's field of application been extended, but it has been placed outside all constitutional monitoring.

The reforms voted by the National Assembly and Senate meeting in Congress on July 31 (amidst general indifference on the eve of the summer recess) strengthens the president's hand, but does nothing for parliament. It signals a weakening of constitutional power, as the Constitutional Council will have no say in a referendum bill put directly to the people by the president.

Since the political crisis began, two important and contradictory difficulties need to be corrected: the intermediary institutions, beginning with parliament itself; and the public's sense that control over their own destiny has been taken out of their hands.

Involving the public more closely in important decisions by extending the scope for referendums was inevitable and probably a good thing. In the event, it became all the more essential to rehabilitate parliament. Getting parliament to sit nine months in a row (from October to June, instead of in two three-monthly sessions as before) is not enough in itself.

A good reform would have consisted of linking the referendum's extension with two conditions — associating parliament fully with the move and consulting the Constitutional Council first. Without this, the constitutional safeguards in force for the past 20 years, which help to strengthen the rule of law and guarantee liberties, go out the window. This is what the new government has set out to achieve.

Everything suggests that France now has two constitutions. One is parliamentary: it has hardly been improved and remains a very restrictive conduit for national representation. Parliament is weak in relation to the executive, and its constitution is subject to monitoring. The other is a presidential constitution which will instigate an exclusive relationship between the president and the people, and fall outside all control.

In short, the amendment sets a dangerous precedent.

(August 1)

Diplomacy on the run

EDITORIAL

FRANCE and Australia are facing a showdown over nuclear tests. On August 1, Canberra announced it had barred Dassault from bidding for an Australian air force contract and Paris recalled its ambassador to Australia in protest against the "discrimination" which France was facing.

The Australians argue that the Pacific, where they are a major power, should become a nuclear-free zone, a prospect with which the United States has recently expressed agreement.

They are also justified in feeling Jacques Chirac's decision is out of step with today's mood and represents a haughty gesture of grandeur that is diminished by Europe's (and, therefore, France's) helplessness in Bosnia.

But Canberra's indignation is selective: since the French moratorium of 1992, China has carried out six nuclear tests and the Australians haven't made a great fuss about them. But Paris cannot cling to its decision by using this as a counter-argument: the attitude of France has been condemned more severely than expected by the South Pacific Forum and Asean countries, and it is heading for a diplomatic fiasco.

'He is going to be more unpopular in Japan than Edith Cresson'

France would be wrong to dismiss Australian anger as Canberra's ambition to throw the French out of the Pacific. France must seek good neighbourly relations in a region where trade is built on practices free of animosity.

It is, therefore, doubtful that recalling the French ambassador in Canberra is a clever move. Even though Australia's Francophobia is reprehensible in its severity, France should calm things down.

It should remember that its decision has caused an uproar around the world, particularly in Germany and Japan, and is likely to be taken up by protesters in France when the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima is commemorated.

Paris has hit a bad patch and it is already hinting it might group together the tests so as to get out of it as fast as possible.

(August 3)

Nigerian newspapers fight against the political odds

Michèle Maringues in Lagos

THE Opposition daily AM News carries a small box on its front page reminding readers that its political commentator Kunle Ajibade has been in custody for several weeks without being officially charged with any offence.

Ajibade [AM News has since reported that he has been given a life sentence] is not the only journalist in custody. At least six others, including Chris Anyanwu (editor and managing director of the independent weekly, TSM), have been imprisoned for their professional activities. The complaint against many of them is said to be that they protected their sources of information in the recent case of the conspiracy against General Sani Abacha's military regime.

Yet Gen Abacha likes to say: "Our press is one of the freest in the world." The claim is risible coming from a man who has shut down three big press groups (Concord, Punch and Guardian) since May 1994.

"The press is the oldest democratic institution in the country, in existence long before parliament and the political parties," said Tunde Fatunde, an academic who writes in AM News. Nigeria's first daily newspaper was founded in 1859 at Abeokuta, the "intellectual capital" of the Yoruba region in the south west, whereas the Muslim north had to wait until the second world war for its first newspaper.

Even today, the influence that the Lagos and Ibadan newspapers exercise irritates the northern establishment, which accuses them of being partisan.

Forward-looking individuals in the north soon understood the value of a media outlet which, even though it reached only a few thousand people, still had the power to influence the authorities and ensure publicity for itself. The Democrat appeared in the early 1980s. It was owned by Ismaila Isa, a Katsina businessman connected to Babaginda and Abacha and in possession of fat government contracts.

Ibrahim Babangida himself invested large sums of money in the Heritage Press group based in the federal capital Abuja. The group is inactive today. He is also reported to have financed the weekly Citizen in Kaduna as a forum for Muslims graduating out of Zaria University. The weekly was founded by a few dissidents from the northern government daily New Nigerian.

But Citizen closed when its protector, Babangida, was forced to step down. Also out is the Concord group, which was banned in order to punish its multimillionaire owner, Moshood Abiola, who has been in prison for more than a year. The ban on the Guardian, regarded by its readers as the country's leading newspaper, has just been lifted. It is owned by the businessman Alex Ibru, who was home affairs minister in Abacha's first cabinet.

Among the new publications that have appeared are AM News, PM News, Third Eye, Independent and This Day. The others are publications with limited audiences, like the National Truth, The Profile, or The Broom financed by Tiv businessmen.

The frantic succession of new publications appearing on newsstands, which mirrors the war of influence various political and ethnic groups are waging, should not hide the fact that Nigerian newspapers are going through a crisis. Many local newspapers have been forced out of business, while government dailies like the New Nigerian and the Daily Times are faced with closure because of difficulties in obtaining newsprint and paying staff.

Nigeria has about 25,000 journalists working under widely varying conditions. What does a venerable institution like the Daily Times, which scoops up most of the advertising contracts, or the Port Harcourt Sunray, with its sophisticated installations and colour printing, have in common with AM News and the Classic, whose editorial offices have neither phones nor faxes?

In these circumstances, it is easy for a politician to slip a "small envelope" into a journalist's hand for publishing an uncritical article or omitting to report something embarrassing. Janet Anderson, the BBC correspondent in Lagos, has revealed that two of the military administrators who replaced the civilian governors in the federation's 30 states offered her money. The regime closely monitors foreign broadcasts in English and especially in Hausa (BBC, VOA and Deutsche Welle), which have may listeners in northern Nigeria.

DESPITE its venality, the Nigerian press still displays a spirit of resistance. One man who symbolises this is Bayo Onanuga, the great specialist of "guerrilla journalism". In the spring of 1992, with his fellow journalists on the weekly Concord, he published an explosive report on the Babangida regime. The angry president ordered the closure of the group, owned by Abiola, and called on the journalists concerned to sign a letter of apology. Bayo and his friends preferred to quit. A year later, they founded the weeklies News and Tempo, and in 1994 the dailies AM News and PM News.

The trick is to have several newspaper and periodical names registered so as to be able to continue appearing in print even when one is banned. But creating new publications has become more expensive since the passing of a decree in December 1993.

On several occasions the police have seized printing plates of a newspaper before it was printed only to see next day the same text printed by one of hundreds of small businesses working out of makeshift offices in southern towns. It is even said that Tempo is secretly made up at night in a truck.

Fact caught up with fiction when Radio Freedom Frequency, a pirate station broadcasting in Lagos around midnight, came on the air at the end of June. The station is said to be operating out of a suitcase, which enables the organisers, who are close to the National Democratic Alliance, to foil police vigilance. Its signature tune is an old anti-militarist Fela Kuti hit called Authority Stealing, and its presenter, imitating American radio DJs, calls himself Better Tomorrow.

(August 2)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 13 1995

Kurds caught in the political crossfire

Washington wants the Iraqi Kurds to forget their differences and join forces against Iraq, reports **Mouna Maïm**

IRAN is becoming involved in the Kurdish conflict. The Iraqi regime is rubbing its hands. Humanitarian organisations are incapable of carrying out their work. And Operation Provide Comfort is turning into a farce. The United States, therefore, has had to step into the murderous fighting that has been going on for over a year between Iraq's two leading Kurdish factions.

As warnings and calls to reason have fallen on deaf ears, the US administration has arranged a meeting between Jalal Talabani's Kurdish Patriotic Union (KPU) and Masud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). The Kurdish leaders announced on July 31 that a preliminary meeting would be held from August 9-11 in Lisbon.

Even the Kurds themselves don't remember what set off the conflict in May 1994 or why they have been fighting for so long. KDP "confiscation" of customs levies collected at the border with Turkey, KPU "monopolisation" of the assets of certain ministries and customs levies at the Iranian border, a dispute over the ownership of a plot of land, and the fate of Arbil (the capital of Kurdistan) have all been put forward as excuses for justifying the resumed fighting (more than 2,000 killed so far) that underlies a power struggle between two traditional tribal chiefs. Talabani and Barzani could not miraculously turn themselves into leaders of democratic parties merely on the strength of one short-lived experiment in parliamentary self-management launched in 1992 in Iraqi Kurdistan.

For differing reasons, the warring between Kurdish factions suits Turkey and Iran, both of which have substantial Kurdish minorities on their own territories. Above all, Turkey fears that an Iraqi Kurdish self-management project could ultimately become an embryonic state and incite its own Kurdish minority to agitate for independence. Conversely, the quarrel between the KPU and the KDP seems to be just as dangerous because it gives more scope for manoeuvre to Turkey's Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has bases in Iraqi Kurdistan. Ankara is, therefore, urging the Iraqi Kurds to become reconciled with Baghdad and seek a solution for their problems within the framework of a united Iraq.

But the US disagrees: it is determined to maintain Saddam Hussein's isolation. So it wants the Kurds to work out a solution of their own. Washington's concern for the Kurds is all the greater (it has sent messages and mediators to them) since Baghdad has dispatched an emissary to Kurdistan to take stock of the situation. Worse still, Iran (regarded by Washington as the region's other outcast) has offered its services and has received KPU and KDP delegations. Tehran is attempting to restore in Iraqi Kurdistan the influence it lost in July 1991 when a western coalition of Americans, British and French took under its protection the part of Kurdistan north of the 36th parallel that falls outside Baghdad's control.

Washington has already warned the Kurds on several occasions that their fighting is endangering Operation Provide Comfort. The United States "needs" this zone just as much as the Kurds do. Among other things, it helps it put pressure on Baghdad and clip its authority.



Ready to fight: a soldier bristles with arms in the Kurdish struggle

Any future agreement under US auspices between the warring Kurdish factions is likely to be precarious. Several past ceasefires and de facto truces have collapsed. It is true the US enjoys considerable prestige among the Kurds, but it is equally true that Washington has a way of putting pressure on them. On the face of it, Turkey and Iran could prove to be more effective if both decided to close their borders with Iraq, depriving the belligerents of funds and putting the squeeze on Kurdistan.

The in-fighting among the Kurds has gone a long way towards weakening the Iraqi National Council (INC), the largest coalition of parties opposed to Saddam Hussein's regime, because the KDP and the KPU are its leading groups. The INC has established its headquarters in Kurdistan.

The INC is also weakened by an internal crisis: many prominent independent members and groups have withdrawn from the coalition or have put their support on hold. One charge made against INC chairman Ahmad Jalabi is that he behaves like an autocrat and refuses to reveal the sources of the coalition's finances. Many opponents are convinced the INC is bankrolled exclusively by the CIA, and they have no intention of being perceived as America's stooges.

(August 2)

Beijing steps up the pressure on Taiwan

Francis Deron reports from China as relations with its independent neighbour deteriorate

WILL there be a Strait war between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan? It hasn't come to that yet, but the military posturing and propaganda outbursts Beijing is currently directing at an island that has escaped its control for the past 46 years are taking a worrying turn.

The rhetoric and the ostentatious nature of the present turmoil remind some observers of the run-up to the military operations the People's Republic conducted outside its borders, such as the 1978-79 conflict with Vietnam.

Things are still only at the stage of intimidatory manoeuvres designed almost explicitly to force Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui to whittle down his diplomatic ambitions for Taipei.

All the same, the incipient crisis is one more in an already well-furnished inventory of reasons for becoming concerned about China in its present transition period. What certainty is there that Beijing will continue to behave as it has since the 1979 normalisation of Sino-American relations? China, it was then assumed, was all too happy to become a useful strategic card the West could play against the Soviet Union. At moments of tension, it refrained from pursuing initiatives that could wreck both its image abroad and its immediate economic interests.

Given the many dividends it gained from Hong Kong's position, mainland China was thought unlikely to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. The same thought process made Taiwan out to be an even more attractive goose for Beijing. Taiwan's prosperity and the economic interests of its middle class forced part of its industrial production to be relocated on the mainland because of rising costs on the island.



On guard . . . Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui greets military students in Taipei PHOTOGRAPH: CC YAO

Much of this analysis is now obsolete, not only because the cold war is over, but also because China's own internal dynamic has, in the absence of an ideological crutch, propelled it on a nationalistic course as one of the big powers. And this is happening with the passive complicity of industrialised countries which, for a variety of reasons, have given it economic help to bring about the transformation. Some, like the Europeans and Americans, hope to gain access to its huge market, while others, in particular the Japanese, are concerned about securing mainland China's internal stability.

Although there has been tacit acceptance of China's transformation it has not been accompanied by a genuine conversion of the political regime. In the 1960s, for example, ideological pretences given for Mao's quarrel with Moscow could be used to cloak the breakdown in relations between China and the Soviet Union. But Mao's fundamental motivation sprang from China's perception of itself: its rulers had no intention of taking orders from abroad on how to promote its secret project to give China back its dominant role on the world stage.

Communism's economic bankruptcy naturally prompted the second-generation leaders around Deng Xiaoping to fall back on the historic certitudes they could invoke in such a situation: China used to think it was alone in the world. The least others could do today would be to acknowledge its rightful sphere of influence.

This is where peripheral issues come in, such as those provoked since the founding of the communist regime by four disputes along its borders — with Korea, India, the Soviet Union and Vietnam — followed by the present-day crises connected with the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty and the status of Taiwan, not to mention Tibet or the border regions annexed by the empire in the wake of post-war upheavals, when the international community did not know what to do with these regions.

Hong Kong provides an illustration of the current mindset in Beijing. The idea that Hong Kong is the goose that lays the golden eggs is out of date because the current crop of Chinese leaders today have far bigger and more ambitious projects for their own economic bases, particularly along the mainland coast, which are open to trade with the outside world.

Hong Kong's usefulness for Beijing has therefore diminished. For an inward-looking regime the colony was once the only gateway to the outside world. The Hong Kong economy still has practical advantages for Beijing. It can be used as a launching pad from which to project investments beyond its borders and as a service centre for recycling capital produced on the mainland and injecting it back into the Chinese economy under favourable conditions as "foreign" investments.

But such economic returns count for less than the political advantage of seizing control of the social system when the British colony reverts to China in 1997. This is set against the backdrop of a highly defensive central government in Beijing which has become sensitive to the threat of growing regionalism in recent years.

Similarly, Taiwan has lately become a source of valuable contributions to the mainland in capital and management skills. But its very existence as a *de facto* independent entity presents Beijing with a problem that no one in the Chinese leadership is capable of dealing with.

The problem is made more acute by Taiwan's recent acquisition of modern armaments — even though Taiwanese defence officials recently acknowledged with embarrassment that to monitor the missile tests Beijing was carrying out on its doorstep it did not have the means to be independent, in this instance, of the United States.

At the time of the Gulf war, the Taiwanese drew parallels with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait: how would the international community react if a powerful country, using the excuse of a historic claim to sovereignty, attacked a small neighbouring state? Few thought that it would bring a vigorous riposte from the United States, although it has treaty ties with Taiwan. While it is true the balance of power in Washington, with a Congress alarmed about Beijing, tilts more in favour of Taipei today, it remains to be seen what practical form this would take if push came to shove.

China naturally relies on this to try to force Taiwan to keep a low profile. But military experts consider the means Beijing is using to achieve this end are increasingly risky: if it is ever carried away by its aggressive posturing, it could find it difficult to revert to a more moderate stance. This is particularly true as logic demands that the other side retaliate. And in such a situation, climbing down becomes an uncertain and politically more perilous exercise than escalation.

(July 30/31)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 13 1995

Making money out of weed

In France cannabis is being cultivated with EU subsidies — for purely monetary reasons — but no one told the drug squad, says **Luc Leroux**

THE inhabitants of Châteauneuf-lès-Martigues, a village near Marseilles, recently became intrigued when a field by the side of the D9 road received a regular flow of nocturnal visitors.

There was apparently nothing special about the field except that it was planted with rows of delicate-green plants with tall straight stems and deeply lobed leaves.

When the attention of the police was drawn to the phenomenon by a local resident on July 26, they decided to get a pharmacist to identify the plant. He was in no doubt that it was hemp, or *Cannabis sativa*. The Marseilles drugs squad, when called in, put the market value of the plantation at hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The farmer whose field of almost two hectares had attracted such unwelcome interest revealed that he was growing the plant — with, if you please, a subsidy from the European Union — as part of an experimental project organised by the company Sud-Céréales with a view to constructing, in the next two years, a hemp-processing factory that would produce pulp for the manufacture of bank notes and cheques.

Sud-Céréales had declared the existence and nature of the plantation to all the proper authorities, including the gendarmerie responsible for the area. But, a company spokesman admitted, it had failed to inform the Marseilles drugs squad.

The day after the police swoop, Banque de France stated that it was not interested in paper made from hemp. For several years to come, French bank notes will continue to be made of "100-per-cent cotton".

This typically Marseillais story has produced much mirth in cafés on the city's most famous thoroughfare, La Canebière (which translates, etymologically, as "the hemp field").

The night after the news broke, 100 people armed with billhooks managed to cut swathes through the field despite strict police surveillance. "Youngsters filled huge bin-bags with the stuff and wove garlands for each other. They seemed curiously exhilarated," said a local resident.

There is bad news, though, for the pot smokers who thought they had discovered a cheap and endless supply of their favourite substance: in accordance with European standards, agricultural hemp contains less than 3 per cent tetrahydrocannabinol, cannabis's hallucinatory agent. So they will have to do a great deal of smoking before getting a high.

(July 29)

A Muslim priest prays over the bodies of the 9,999 and 10,000th Sarajevan victims. Bosnia marks the religious 'front line' where the ethnic question *is* the religious question PHOTOGRAPH: RIKARD LARMA

A return to the dark ages

Henri Tincq writes of the centuries-long history of dispute between the Orthodox Church and Islam

IT IS all very well for us to pretend, as we so often do, that conflicts in the Balkans and along the southern rim of the former Soviet empire are not religious wars, or to regard notions like "Pan-Slavism", "Pan-Orthodoxy" and "Pan-Islamism" as abstractions, even myths.

The fact is that when the close interconnections between national, ethnic and religious factors are considered, and the forces involved are analysed, the terrible spectre of a religious "return of the repressed" pitting Islam against Christianity becomes a distinct possibility.

How did the situation get to the point where it is today? In the Balkans, Armenia and Georgia, an important role is played by religious memory acting as a vehicle to perpetuate the national conscience during a troubled period of history.

Members of the Orthodox Church of the East, more than any other religious family, derive their identity from their memories. This explains why Serb actions and Greek recriminations are perceived in the West, rightly or wrongly, as expressions of archaic nationalist feelings, expansionist ambitions or dreams of restoration.

Of all the main cultures within whose boundaries the Orthodox Church thrives — Slav, Greek, Caucasian, Romanian and Middle-Eastern — it is Egypt, Lebanon and Israel's occupied territories that run the greatest risk of experiencing bloodshed at the hands of Islam. Yet it is in the same region that a legacy of social interaction between Muslims and Orthodox remains.

From the seventh century on, the patriarchates of the Middle East — such jewels in the crown of the early Christian church as Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria — were swamped by Arab invasions and could not prevent Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa crossing over to Islam.

Then came the Crusades. In the meantime Russia and Ukraine, which were Christianised at the end of the first millennium, had been invaded by the Mongols, who converted to Islam in the 14th century.

While Muslims today still look back bitterly at the Crusades, Orthodox communities in Greece, Serbia and Macedonia remain traumatised by nearly six centuries of Ottoman rule. But they realise, too, that if Christianity managed to survive so many forms of occupation (be it Arab, Ottoman or Soviet) in the Balkans, the Middle East and the southern and eastern reaches of Europe, it was due to the great wealth of their liturgical tradition.

So the apparent intransigence of the Orthodox, which so surprises westerners, results precisely from awareness of the historical continuity of their spiritual heritage.

A new era should have been ushered in during the late 19th and early 20th century by the fall of the Ottoman Empire and establishment of a secular republic in Turkey, the independence of Arab peoples, and the liberation of the Slavs, Greeks and Romanians. But an inexorable chain of events has been set in motion.

Old resentments and dreams have sprung to life again in southern and eastern Europe following the resurgence of nationalism, the rise of Islamist movements, and the weakness of churches persecuted by communist dictatorships.

In this respect, the Orthodox Church and Islam act as two sets of references, two ways of belonging and two repositories of the collective memory, in which the political takes precedence over the spiritual.

The "front line" between the two religions is to be found in Bosnia, the region of Greece and Turkey, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The situation on the ground strongly suggests that whereas in the former Soviet empire the ethnic question comprises and transcends the religious question, in the Balkans the ethnic question *is* the religious question.

In Bosnia "nations" have been defined by religious communities. Present dreams of a Greater Serbia are deeply rooted in memories of a mystical medieval Serbia, of which Kosovo was the cradle.

The effect of threefold persecution by occupying Nazis, Croat fascists and Tito's brand of communism has been to reactivate a phobia of conspiracy in Serb nationalists, who now regard the alliance between what they call "Germanism", Croat Catholicism and Bosnian Islam as a re-run of the worst episodes in their history, when, as the historian François Thual puts it, "Orthodox Serbia fell into the hands of Muslim Ottomans without the Catholic powers lifting a finger".

But the result, argues Tareq Mitri, an expert on the Orthodox Church, has been an "over-Islamisation" of the Bosnian Muslim identity, to the point where "threatened Bosnians" may turn into "threatening Islamists".

UNTIL 1991, when Islam became a "nation" within the Yugoslav jigsaw puzzle, the converted Slavs of Bosnia lived on good terms with their fellow citizens and refrained from introducing any form of Islamic government. But after the forced — at least to start with — secularisation introduced during Tito's rule, which led to the banning of the veil, the abolition of Sharia courts and the closing down of religious schools, the Muslim identity underwent a renaissance, as part of a national reawakening that provided an alternative to communism.

While Islamic faith and practice had been virtually eradicated, Islam became "no more than a symbolic reference", according to Xavier Bougarel, an expert on Bosnian Muslims, until recent developments led to a deterioration of day-to-day relations and the present tragic situation.

Outrages carried out against Muslims and the destruction of mosques could well prompt a community of refugees to join the ranks of the "Islamists of despair".

Will the war spread and set off a powder keg in a region where Christians and Muslims currently coexist in peace? Experts believe this to be unlikely. The Bosnian pattern, where the nation is identified with a religion, is not found elsewhere, not even in neighbouring countries.

In Albania, for example, national identity was forged by a reaction *against* religion. And in Bulgaria, where the majority of the population is Orthodox, the Muslim religion complements the national and linguistic identity. It is, therefore, far from certain that feelings of solidarity exist between Muslims in the Balkans.

It is even harder to read a religious interpretation into the war in Chechenia and the tensions in the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The massive distribution of Korans, the opening of mosques and the training of imams show the extent to which the Chechen identity is becoming indistinguishable from the Muslim identity. But as soon as the Russians started bombing Grozny last autumn, Patriarch Alexis II of Russia strongly condemned the military intervention and kept the lines of communication open with the Grand Mufti of Chechenia.

And the Russian minorities who belong to an Orthodox tradition avoid adopting too high a profile on political or religious issues. "They know they can no longer rely on Moscow to help them," says Olivier Roy of the French National Scientific Research Centre. "That was something they knew before the outbreak of war in Chechenia; they are even more convinced of it now."

In the Orthodox world, alongside the kind of pragmatism illustrated by the Moscow patriarch's conciliatory attitude to Chechen Muslims, there is another tendency which tries to demonise Islam. It has become increasingly widespread not only in Serbia, Kosovo, Greece (at least as regards the Turks) and Macedonia, but in Caucasian countries such as Armenia and Georgia.

Relentless anti-Turkish feeling in those countries was spawned by centuries of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, but also by two more recent traumatic experiences: the Armenian genocide of 1915 and the Greek-Turkish war of 1922, which resulted in the forced displacement of two million Anatolian Greeks.

Mistrust has also been fanned by Turkey's regional ambitions, by its repression of Kurdish nationalists, and by the Islamists' radical condemnation of the secular model of society bequeathed by Ataturk.

The outrage felt in Greece over the Macedonian question has also hardened the attitude of the Orthodox church towards Islam and Catholicism. And in the face of the Islamist threat, the Orthodox collective imagination, ever nostalgic for Byzantium, has been quick to resuscitate the Athens-Belgrade-Sofia-Bucharest-Moscow "axis".

Although alliances between Orthodox countries have been strengthened by the war in former Yugoslavia, history shows that no such "axis" ever existed. On the contrary, the Orthodox world was riven by rivalries between Greeks and Bulgarians, Greeks and Russians, Constantinople and Moscow, and Romania and Russia.

At a time when the air is thick with wild ideas about expansion or self-defence, it is surely Europe's responsibility to ensure that the Orthodox countries do not feel caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of cultures they find equally foreign: Western Christianity and Islam.

(August 1)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 13 1995

Short-lived brush with fame

Philippe Dagen on the work of a little-known Expressionist painter, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

IT IS a regrettable fact, although perhaps explicable for reasons of sensibility and historical context, that French museums show little interest in 20th century German painting. It has been decades since we were last treated to a retrospective of the works of Otto Dix, Max Beckmann or Lovis Corinth.

The only recent exception to that lack of enthusiasm — and, it has to be admitted, a major one — was the remarkable Expressionist exhibition held at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris almost three years ago.

Continuing in this much-needed exploratory vein, the Musée Matisse in Nice has mounted an exhibition devoted to the works of Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. At the age of 21, he was one of several Dresden painters who on June 7, 1905, founded a group called — apparently at his suggestion — Die Brücke (The Bridge). The group also included Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Fritz Bleyl. Emil Nolde joined the movement the following year.

From that date until the summer of 1914, Schmidt-Rottluff turned out a steady flow of paintings, drawings and engravings. He took part in many collective exhibitions, held individual shows and had his woodcuts published as frontispieces to the group's catalogues and in the magazine Der Sturm.

Throughout that period, Schmidt-Rottluff led a restless and wandering existence, marked by numerous love affairs. He lived successively in Dresden, Berlin and Hamburg.

He was of course familiar with the various avant-garde movements then thriving in Europe. In November 1909, he saw the Paul Cézanne exhibition in Berlin.

In January 1912, he was visited by Franz Marc, who had just founded the Blaue Reiter movement with Wassily Kandinsky and other Munich artists, and, in the autumn, discovered Cubism at an exhibition



Three At Table, a 1914 woodcut by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, a German-Expressionist painter who was later ridiculed by the Nazis

in Cologne. In July 1914, Schmidt-Rottluff went to Munich and met Kandinsky and Paul Klee, another Blaue Reiter artist.

Schmidt-Rottluff's itinerant life was typical of many modern painters of that period. It reflected an artistic Europe that disregarded frontiers and cared not a whit for nationalism — a Europe that was wiped out by the first world war.

The paintings in the exhibition which date from that intensely-lived period strain for paroxysm and scorn rigour; they cock a snook at tradition and offend the mainstream artistic taste of the time.

Schmidt-Rottluff's style changed rapidly. At first post-Impressionist, in about 1906, it soon showed the influence of Vincent Van Gogh, before going through a fleeting Cézanne-like phase. Towards 1912, it gradually became more stable.

Non-imitative colours applied by scumbling or with intersecting brushstrokes are contained within a synthesising drawing whose form is massive and whose outline is often a black line.

That style of drawing, which totally dominated the woodcut genre of the period, reduces objects to their simplest geometrical forms: houses are represented as cubes, flowers as stars, and trees as ovals.

Here Schmidt-Rottluff is probably influenced by Pablo Picasso or Georges Braque but keeps his own lively line and gesturality.

The parallel between Fauvism and Expressionism, which has often been drawn without ever being really convincing, does not work any better in Schmidt-Rottluff's case. Although the present retrospective is being held at the Musée Matisse, he has very little in common with the painter of the Odalisques.

While Matisse aspired to an art of skilled, sensual delectation, Schmidt-Rottluff struggled with nature. Matisse detected and brought out the hidden beauty of objects and bodies; Schmidt-Rottluff suspected they contained hostile presences and omens of imminent disaster.

There is no Baudelairean calm or voluptuousness in his 1912 painting of three nude women, scarlet figures huddling among jagged bushes that seem sharper than thorns.

The war accentuated that tendency in Schmidt-Rottluff. Despite attempts by his friends to get him exempted from military service, he remained in Russia, first on the battle front, then at staff headquarters, from 1915 to 1918. There, he got bored and became increasingly embittered. He produced some wood sculptures and engravings.

The pictures he painted when the war was over depict Russian villages weighed down by compact cloud masses, or woods lit by a blood-red moon which is reflected in water and pierces the heavens like a circular wound.

The artistic principles he relied on before the war continue to be effectively used: an angular geometrical layout divides up planes of clashing colours. Faces become sightless masks, bodies as stiff and as rudimentary as fetishes. There is an increased element of primitivism. Dark blues, sulphurous yellows and grey-greens predominate.

It then looked as though Expressionism, thanks to Schmidt-Rottluff, was going to be able to survive the war, which had broken up the Brücke and Blaue Reiter movements, forced Kandinsky to return to Russia, and killed Marc and August Macke.

But despite the popularity of the group known as Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) and the celebrity enjoyed by Dix and George Grosz, Schmidt-Rottluff did not espouse the fashion for clinically realistic representation or cold naturalism.

He started travelling again and exhibited widely. Soon afterwards, in 1920, a monograph was devoted to him. People began collecting his work. But he had got off to a false start, and his moment of resurrection was shortlived: in 1921, his dealer Wilhelm Niemeyer decided to follow fashion and abandoned him in favour of a leading Neue Sachlichkeit figure, Franz Radziwill.

From the mid-twenties on, Schmidt-Rottluff's works became monumental. The simplification is less bold, dissonances are smoothed out, and landscapes become elegiac. Although the Nice exhibition offers a carefully calculated selection of works, this falling off in quality cannot be concealed.

The show ends with a series of disappointing paintings, with the possible exception of Femme Verte, a picture of a woman contemplating an African statue, which has great power despite being a late work (it dates from 1956).

But then it is doubtful whether a judicious assessment can be made of Schmidt-Rottluff's *oeuvre*. In 1933 he resigned from the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts. In 1936 the modern section of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, where he was represented, was closed down.

The following year, 50 of his paintings were subjected to public ridicule at the Nazi-organised exhibition condemning so-called "degenerate art". In 1938, 600 of his works were plucked from German museums and burnt.

SCHMIDT-ROTTLUFF could no longer get hold of the paints and canvases he needed for his work. In 1941 he was officially forbidden to paint. Between 1943 and 1945, the works he had managed to rescue and store in Berlin and Silesia were destroyed by bombs and shells, except for a few early paintings which in 1947 were discovered in a Berlin cellar beneath mounds of rubble.

There can be little doubt that Schmidt-Rottluff was driven to despair by a combination of the ravages of war, Nazi hatred and relentless ill luck. This has to be kept in mind as one makes one's way through the Nice exhibition: the works on show are no more than vestiges of an oeuvre, and however distinguished most of them may be, it is far from certain that they give us an accurate idea of Schmidt-Rottluff's true stature.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Musée Matisse, Nice. Closed Tuesday. Until October 8

(July 27)

Léger, a man of many parts

Geneviève Breerette

IT IS well known that Fernand Léger was a painter whose activities embraced all forms of artistic expression. But while his work for the cinema has been well documented, little is known today of his relationship with other performing arts.

The Musée National Fernand Léger at Biot, on the Côte d'Azur, has mounted a well-organised and attractive exhibition which, although not very large, covers every aspect of Léger's work outside the painting medium.

His first contribution to the cinema, which was a favourite avant-garde medium just after the first world war, was a project for an animated film called Charlot Cubiste in 1920: in it, a Charlie Chaplin character has a nightmare that he is the leading exponent of a new modern aesthetic movement. All that has survived are a synopsis and three puppets (which are on show).

Then Léger discovered Abel Gance, who was making La Roue, and designed the posters for the film, which came out in 1924, as did Marcel L'Herbier's L'Inhumaine, for which Léger designed one of the sets. That same year, with the technical assistance of Dudley Murphy, he completed his own film Le Ballet Mécanique, in which he verified the effects of real movement in his own universe of already animated forms and objects, and tried to achieve what he described as "the absolute spectacle-object".

Léger exploited the same idea in live shows, when he designed the sets and costumes for Rolf de Maré's Ballets Suédois in 1922 (Skating Rink; story by Riciotto Canudo and music by Arthur Honegger) and in 1923 (La Création du Monde; story by Blaise Cendrars and music by Darius Milhaud).

Léger did not try out his visual ideas in stage productions again until the years 1934-37. The results were less convincing. He designed puppets for Jacques Chesnais' Match de Boxe, as well as sets and costumes for the ballet David Triomphant, starring Serge Lifar, and for Naissance d'Une Cité, which was put on at the 1937 Universal Exhibition.

Naissance d'Une Cité was an ambitious undertaking described by its author, Jean-Richard Bloch, as "a veritable popular opera — sporting, social, industrial, gymnastic and legendary". Bloch aimed to create a great work for the masses with songs (by Milhaud and Honegger), music-hall numbers and circus acts. Léger was eager to make his contribution, even though he was already busy decorating several pavilions at the same exhibition (with Charlotte Perriand, Le Corbusier, Albert Gleizes and Survage).

After all, it was Léger who had said he was "at the disposal of the organisers of popular festivities, to arrange colours, for example, and if desired to cause them to run riot". This was an ideal chance for him to pursue his avant-garde ideas within the framework of the militant left.

Léger persuaded Bloch to opt for an avant-garde aesthetic programme which he had not initially planned. Naissance d'Une Cité, which was put on at the Vélodrome d'Hiver before, in theory, going on a world tour, was a total flop. Louis Aragon, who had produced the show, had to dig into his personal savings, while Léger and the actors had to accept lower fees. A consolation for Léger was that he was able to try out the "new realism" he was then introducing into his paintings, where "the imagination and the real meet and intertwine".

Another 10 years elapsed before Léger worked for the stage again, first on the sets and costumes of Le Pas d'Acier (1948), a ballet by Lifar with music by Sergei Prokofiev, then on a Milhaud opera and a Maurice Cazenave ballet with music by Maurice Jarre.

The exhibition does its best to illustrate Léger's itinerary, despite some inevitable gaps due to the fact that his sketches for various shows are currently the subject of considerable interest on the art market, with a major Léger retrospective in the offing.

But while the visual elements of some productions are sadly missing, in other instances one is able to regale oneself, as with the sketches for the animal costumes of La Création du Monde, which are shown alongside some Baule masks and sculptures that inspired Léger. And there is an amusing rarity, the three duralumin elements of the original sets for Le Pas d'Acier: the tail of an aeroplane, a skyscraper that rises six metres into the air, and a helicoid.

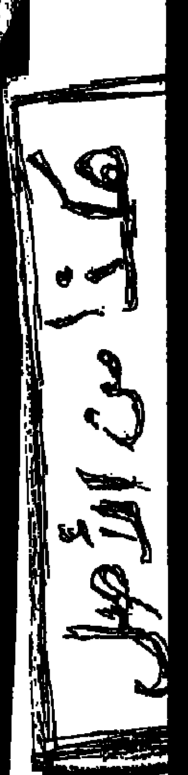
This interesting exhibition makes one curious to know to what extent Léger's experimental work in the theatre and cinema caused his painting to develop, and, conversely, to find out if and how his visual experiments influenced the performing arts.

Fernand Léger et le Spectacle, Musée National Fernard Léger, Biot. Closed Tuesday. Until October 2

(July 28)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 13 1995

The Washington Post

Memories Color Japan's Self-Image

T.R. Reid in Hiroshima

THE MAIN building at the Atomic Bomb Museum here features a horrific exhibit that might be labeled "Banned at the Smithsonian." It is a heartbreaking collection of burned and shattered remnants that The Bomb left behind: blistered human skin, crumpled cars and close-up pictures of disfigured women, children and animals.

Meanwhile, the newly opened annex of the same museum features an exhibit that could have been called, until now, "Banned in Hiroshima." Without mincing words, this display depicts Japan's brutal effort to conquer and colonize East Asian countries, and shows how Japan's aggression in Asia and at Pearl Harbor led directly to the mighty bomb that fell here exactly 50 years ago.

The uniformed schoolchildren and the somber, often-sobbing adults thronging the two exhibit halls this summer thus get a feel for the conflicting and contentious strains of memory that color Japan's image of itself in the war.

It is a conflict that clearly influences this country's sense of identity to this day — a conflict that remains unresolved after a half-century of national debate.

For some Japanese, the appropriate concept for this country's role in World War II is "Japan as Victim" — particularly since Japan is the only country ever to have been attacked with nuclear weapons. For others, the point to be emphasized is "Japan as Aggressor." Another prominent concept here holds that war itself is a fundamental evil, regardless of political circumstances, and thus both Japan and its enemies in World War II were in the wrong.

It all makes for a far more complex and nuanced state of mind than conventional wisdom in the United States would seem to acknowledge.

In the U.S. news media, it is commonplace to say that "the Japanese" refuse to face up to their past. Such statements do apply to some Japanese — including some conservatives who carry weight in national politics. But the notion that "the Japanese" — 125 million people — can be treated as a monolithic whole with a unified zeal to whitewash their past is out of sync with reality.

This summer, the Japanese media have returned the compliment, so to speak. They argue that America is the country that maintains a monolithic, authorized view of the war — or at least, of the atomic bombs that ended it.

This stems from the controversy surrounding the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay exhibit, when political pressure forced the National Air and Space Museum to drop the display of atom-bomb relics offered on loan from the museum here. The Japanese reaction was harsh. It is now Japanese conventional wisdom that "the Americans" refuse to face up to the damage the nuclear weapons wreaked on civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Japanese views of World War II have ranged left and right, back and forth, over the past half-century. In fact, the Japanese cannot even agree on what the war should be called.

Initially, it was known here as the Greater East Asian War, reflecting the contention of Japan's wartime military dictators that Japanese invasion of its mainland neighbors was designed to create a "greater East Asian co-prosperity sphere."

This is still the preferred terminology for conservatives who argue that Japan's war was a noble effort to free Asian nations from Western colonial rule.

After Japan's surrender, U.S. occupation forces established a War Guilt Information Program, designed to educate the Japanese about their own nation's guilt for starting the war. As part of that effort, the Greater East Asian War was renamed the Pacific War, a relatively neutral term that is still widely used today.

Meanwhile, many textbooks refer to the conflict as the Fifteen-Year War. This refers to the period from Japan's invasion of China in 1931 to its surrender in 1945. "Historians tend to use this name," explained World War II scholar Hirose Watanabe, "because it shows that what Japan did in the 1930s was the start of an unbroken path that led to what happened to Japan in 1945."

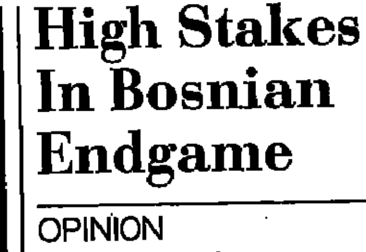
As the name of the war has changed here over time, so have attitudes toward it. For the first decade or so after Japan surrendered, this nation was bitterly anti-war. The prevailing mood was hostile to any war at any time, but particularly toward Japan's own aggression. This view was impelled partly by the people's severe suffering at the end of the war, and partly by the Tokyo war-crimes trial, which publicized atrocities of which the Japanese people had never been informed.

Many Japanese, particularly on the left, still hold to this harshly critical assessment, known as the "Tokyo Trial view" of the war. It is a key reason why the public here is so wary of any overseas role for the Japanese military. "The Japanese cannot be trusted with military power," former Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa said in 1991. "We have proven that."

But as conservatives reasserted control over Japanese politics, this harsh view gave way to a sort of willful ignorance. The conservative Education Ministry began changing the critical view of the war set forth in public-school textbooks.

Continuing research into the lasting impact of nuclear weapons, together with the publication in Japanese of John Hersey's powerful book Hiroshima, fed a growing feeling here that Japan was not so much the perpetrator of evil as it was the victim of a great war crime: the use of the atomic bomb. That explains why the older section of the A-bomb museum here, opened in 1955, dealt only with Japan's suffering. The exhibits tended to infuriate American visitors because there was no explanation of why the terrible weapon was used.

Over the past few years, however, the notion that Japan itself was the malefactor has regained authority. In 1993, then-Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa announced to the world that "Japan was wrong in the war. Japan was the aggressor." Meanwhile, the government admitted to several atrocities, including the army's program to round up tens of thousands of Asian women to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers.



Silent tribute . . . praying for the dead at Hiroshima PHOTO: ERIKO SUGITA

As the concept of "Japan as Aggressor" took strength, a major change in textbook policy was announced in 1989. Since then, history books at all classroom levels here have included far more material about Japan's brutal treatment of the Asian nations it conquered.

A Washington Post survey of the 12 textbooks most widely used in Japanese schools indicates that the books make it clear Japan waged a "war of aggression" as a "fascist state" allied with Italy and Germany.

PERHAPS more important, the history of World War II has become required reading, because questions about the war now appear routinely on high school and college entrance tests. "For many years, high-school history classes didn't bother with World War II, because the teachers and students knew they wouldn't see questions about it on the entrance exams," University of Tokyo scholar Yasuaki Ohnuma noted. "But now, the history section of the exams is full of questions about the 20th century. Students feel they have to learn about the war."

With the coming of the 50th anniversary of the war's end, there has also been a spate of new war museums, known here as "aggression museums." Like the new annex at Hiroshima's museum, they deal with Japan's aggression as well as its own suffering.

Here, for example, the museum now includes a large photograph of a joyous parade through the streets of Hiroshima in 1937, when local citizens cheered the fall of Nanking, now called Nanjing. The caption reads, "Hiroshima's citizens celebrated with a torchlight parade. In Nanjing, however, Chinese were being massacred by the Japanese Army."

Hiroshima's mayor, Takashi Hiraoka, said recently that the new annex was a reaction to global opinion. "We ourselves were overwhelmed by the terrible damage of the atomic bomb," he said. "But we found that people around the world were not necessarily sympathetic. We realized it was necessary to see ourselves not only as victims of the war, but also as perpetrators."

While the notion of "Japan as Aggressor" seems to be ascendant at the moment, there are still strong interest groups that loathe it. That is why it was so difficult for Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, a liberal, to win passage this year of a parliamentary resolution apologizing to Japan's victims in the war.

Opinion polls agree that most Japanese citizens support an official apology. But conservative politicians, backed organizationally and financially by veterans and their survivors, resisted so vigorously that Murayama barely won passage of a mild resolution that left some Asians even angrier than before.

If Japan's view of the Fifteen-Year War is a subject of enormous dispute here, the last 10 days of that 15-year period are much less contentious. It is clearly the consensus view in Japan that American use of the atomic bomb was inexcusable — no matter what Japan had done in Asia, Pearl Harbor and the South Pacific.

"We cannot and will not deny Japan's aggression, that Japan did evil," said Hiraoka. "But that does not justify an atomic bomb. It is too cruel. It is inhumane to argue that anything justifies nuclear weapons."

High Stakes In Bosnian Endgame

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

MAN'S WILL and need to make war were not extinguished by the nuclear flashes over Hiroshima and Nagasaki 50 years ago this week. Even on the cusp of the 21st century there are places and moments that demand the unleashing of the furies of destruction and conquest.

In recent days the United States government has subtly communicated its judgment that such a moment has arrived for Croatia. Zagreb has for a year methodically prepared its forces to fight the Serbs who have seized territory from the central governments of Croatia and Bosnia and then "ethnically cleansed" the occupied lands.

A retaliatory war by the Croatians, and Washington's encouragement of it, are both justified. But the United States needs to be clear with itself and with other nations about the objectives of its quiet alliance with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and the likely outcomes of this new military campaign.

If the Croatians are successful in halting the current Serb drive against Bosnia's Bihac region and the capital of Sarajevo, Bosnia will effectively become a Croatian protectorate.

That is, Bosnia would survive in its current, truncated form, at Croatian sufferance. After three years of fighting, and the divisions that fighting has produced in the world community, that may be the best deal the Bosnian Muslims can achieve.

The United States must adopt limited objectives in a Bosnian endgame. The effectiveness of the Clinton administration's backing for the Croatian-Bosnian alliance will ultimately be judged by the restraints it can exercise over the forces it has helped unleash, as well as the reasons for unleashing them.

The Croats are not able, and the United States and its allies are not willing to pay the price it would cost, to drive the Serbs off all the territory they have captured from Bosnia — to achieve the full restoration of the boundaries and territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina as recognized by the United Nations in April 1992. That is lamentable. But it is also obvious to all, especially the Serbs.

The United States offered Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic extraordinarily generous terms for a settlement in talks in Belgrade in June. He turned them down. Milosevic thinks he can get more than the 70 percent of Bosnia that Serb forces now occupy.

Only Croatian military victories in Bosnia will disabuse Milosevic of that notion and make him deal. America will then have to be involved in producing a settlement to justify this new bloodletting.

Such a result is not impossible. But neither is it certain.

Holy City Divided By Big Mac Attack

John Lancaster in Jerusalem

THE SPARKLING new McDonald's in the busy central shopping district here is just like any other — Big Macs, milkshakes and Happy Meals, all served up daily by smiling teen-agers in spiffy uniforms — and therein lies the problem.

Most restaurants in this ancient holy city are kosher. But McDonald's standard fare does not meet the requirement for certification as kosher, which in keeping with Jewish law bars the mixing of milk and meat products. McDonald's also opens on the Sabbath — Saturday here — another violation of kosher rules.

In the admittedly extreme view of Yosef Ben Moshe, who wears the long beard, black hat and black suit of an ultra-Orthodox Jew and makes his living as a kosher inspector of Jerusalem restaurants, the results are little short of apocalyptic.

"This leads to bank robberies, murders, decadence and corruption," Moshe said outside McDonald's recently. "When a Jew, a pure soul, eats an impure animal, it destroys his soul, and he becomes a jungle man, an evil animal. . . . This causes people to leave the homeland and mixed marriages. It's worse than Hitler. McDonald's is contaminating all of Israel and all of the Jewish people."

As it happens, the meat served at the 14 McDonald's branches in Israel is kosher, but the real issue is larger. Even some Israelis not particularly offended by the sight of a burger dripping with cheese are troubled by what they see as the growing Americanization of Israeli culture — and McDonald's is but one example.

The Americanization issue came up in July when three Israeli teen-agers died in a stampede at a rock music festival in Arad. President Ezer Weizman used the occasion to comment: "The Israeli people are infected with Americanization. We must be wary of McDonald's; we must be wary of Michael Jackson; we must be wary of Madonnas. This plays a part in what occurred in Arad." Not everyone agreed with his remarks, including the parents of one of the dead teen-agers, to whom Weizman later apologized.

The debate over Americanization might seem strange in a country that is often jokingly called the 51st state because of its close relationship with Washington, which provides Israel with $3 billion in annual aid. Thousands of Israelis, moreover, immigrated from the United States — and brought its cultural influences with them. "Of course there is (American) influence, as in open societies all over the world," said Israel Kimhi of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. "The Russians are not influenced? They don't like jeans? I don't think there's even the slightest antagonism" toward things American.

It is not just a few religious leaders who fail to appreciate McDonald's in Jerusalem. Resentment runs particularly high among Jerusalem's growing population of ultra-Orthodox Jews.

But judging by the crowd of teen-agers, young parents and tourists lined up at a McDonald's counter one recent afternoon, the McDonald's image works here. But even some patrons confessed to being a bit uncomfortable with McDonald's and what it symbolizes.

Avi Simantov, for example, was careful to order his Big Mac without cheese. "We are not religious, but we care," explained Simantov, 24. "The atmosphere of Israel is changing," he said, mopping up ketchup with a french fry. "That's what's wrong. This is just a small part of it. We're losing our innocence."



Americanisation worries many Israelis — PHOTOGRAPH: JUDAH PASSOW

Infant AmeriCorps Faces Firing Squad

OPINION
Colman McCarthy

HABITAT for Humanity, the Georgia-based program that helps poor families build their own homes, has few backers more ardent than Newt Gingrich. Unfailingly, he sports a Habitat for Humanity pin in his lapel and boosts the program as "a model for volunteerism and spiritual renewal."

Gingrich supports his words with action: "Volunteers like myself . . . come on Saturdays to work on the projects. It is a rewarding experience to see the future homeowning family there alongside public- spirited citizens."

Larger rewards would exist if Gingrich had taken time to meet some of the helpers who show up for more than a spell of Saturday dabbling: the 140 members of AmeriCorps who have been on hand full-time the past seven months building 72 houses in Miami, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Americus, Ga., and Homestead, Fla., and with 71 more under construction.

Something is worryingly out of joint. Gingrich can't stand AmeriCorps, the national service program that has placed 20,000 members in 350 projects nationally. But his heart flutters when extolling Habitat for Humanity, whose officials effusively praise AmeriCorps and state that its involvement has been a boon leading to a tripling of houses built.

Gingrich is among those in Congress pushing legislation that would either snuff out or gut AmeriCorps' current $500 million funding. An agency only a few months past the halfway point of its start-up year is being told to fold. This year's 20,000 members — earning a minimum wage and up to $9,500 in education benefits for two years' service — are to be pink-slipped but comforted with the message that they are ever welcome to come back on Saturdays to bang a few nails with Newt.

In Washington, AmeriCorps is clutched in a congressional debate between political philosophies: No, government has no role in paying for community service; no, we don't need a bureaucracy to run a Department of Goodness. Or: Yes, issuing a call to service is a legitimate function of political leaders; yes, a partnership is needed between government and the non-profits.

While the talk goes around and around, like a Ferris wheel with one side rolling high today and back to earth tomorrow, those benefiting by the service of AmeriCorps — mostly poor people — stand to lose the most. In the four areas of service — education; public safety; health and human needs; environment and neighborhood restoration — more than 1,000 non-profits and charities applied to AmeriCorps. Most were well-established groups ready to expand: Teach for America, I Have a Dream Foundation, YMCA, City Year, Public Allies, police departments, Habitat for Humanity.

Congressional critics of AmeriCorps, nearly all of whom are Republicans reflexively negative about any success of Bill Clinton, are not having their views shared by even natural allies. Business Week reports that corporate America — such firms as General Electric, Shell Oil, Anheuser-Busch, Tenneco Gas, Home Depot, Nike — sees the work of AmeriCorps as a godsend that helps revive communities economically and socially. Corporations have come in with money, equipment and volunteers.

Among pro-AmeriCorps CEOs is Erie Chapman of U.S. Health Corporation, Columbus, Ohio. He is a Republican loyalist and fund-raiser for his hometown congressman, John Kasich of the House Budget Committee who has it in for AmeriCorps. Chapman, whose company had pledged $150,000 to City Year, has been trying to educate his pal Kasich at press conferences and congressional hearings: "It's tragic to cut these programs. Why shoot a bunch of innocent kids just to get at the president?"

No credible answer has been given to that question. A few days ago some Republicans tried to say that partisanship isn't motivating them, it's the cost of AmeriCorps. They cited the General Accounting Office as saying that AmeriCorps is spending $9,000 more on each member than was originally planned.

It turns out that the GAO report was not a report at all — only a leaked document in pre-draft form and without the customary internal review or agency comment.

AmeriCorps is a Clinton program but to see it in isolation is not to see it all. AmeriCorps didn't invent service, nor did Peace Corps, VISTA, Habitat for Humanity or any of the hundreds of other national and local programs. The summons to service is thousands of years old, millions if it could be known.

Those who know AmeriCorps best — the non-profits, corporate partners, local communities that have been served — see themselves as much under political siege as this program in its infancy.

Academics Join Hunt Unabomb

Joel Achenbach and John Schwartz

THE FBI has given copi 35,000-word manifesto by the terrorist known as the bomber to dozens of univer fessors in the hope they can the writing as the product mer student or colleague.

The bomber, believed by ties to be responsible for three people and injuring 1978, sent the manuscript the New York Times and The ington Post, saying he would from killing anyone else if paper published it in its within three months. Neither has made a decision yet.

Many of the professors the manuscript, a learned against technology, are ex the history of science.

Members of the task lieve the bomber was exp the history of science or lated discipline in the late the Chicago area, possibly University of Illinois at Chi at Northwestern University the first two bombs were foun

The FBI believes he then to the Salt Lake City area and 1981, then finally to Nor California, where he may hav "some sort of contact" with the versity of California at Berke the words of an FBI statemen bombs were placed in a com sciences building at Berke 1982 and 1985.

For much of his criminal the Unabomber chose to rema nervingly silent about what se to be a random campaign ag unrelated industries and acad fields. The FBI called him ABOM because his early worked in universities or lines.

The only credible sighting bomber was in 1987, outside Lake City computer store jus fore an explosion. He was desc by a witness as a man with reddish-blond hair and a mustache.

He resurfaced six years late June 1993 when, two days apart versity professors were seriously jured with mail bombs. While one person was killed in the fir incidents, his two most re bombs proved lethal, last Dece when a New Jersey advertising ecutive opened a bomb in his ho and then in April when the presi of the California Forestry Ass tion was killed in his office by a bomb addressed to someone else.

With that incident the bomber suddenly became sive, sending letters to newspape a former victim, a college profe and, most dramatically, his manifesto, entitled, "Indus Society and Its Future."

The FBI has placed no restr tions on the professors who ha been given copies of the man script. They can copy it and share with whomever they want, or con ceivably even make the text av able on the Internet. Of this possibility, Turchie said, haven't encouraged that." Asked the FBI had thought of posting it the Net, Turchie said, "It wasn't to us. It's not really ours to publ or make public."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 13 1995

A Strange Trip Through a Tie-Dyed Hell

arolyn Ruff reflects on e seven years she pent as a follower of the rateful Dead on tour

SHE JUMPED from a window of a seedy motel on Market Street in San Francisco. From room full of Deadheads she condered to be her family, she imbed out onto the ledge and then ook one more step forward. No one ade any attempt to stop her. I was n the street below and to this day emain thankful I was looking the ther way. I don't even remember her name anymore. I suspect few remember her at all.

We met at a Grateful Dead show in North Carolina. It was the end of the Dead's fall tour in 1989. I had just completed my first full tour and she had finished what would be her last. She was a bright, beautiful runaway from a loveless home in Pittsburgh. Like many of the hundreds on the tour, she was attracted to the scene around the Grateful Dead as much as the band itself. In the Deadheads, she thought she saw family.

When we saw each other again a few months later in Miami, I was shocked by her mental deterioration. She rambled gravely about how her closest friends had stolen her clothes and her money. She shamefully recounted having sex with men in exchange for food and drugs. She had lice in her hair. She was hungry, lonely, miserable. Another Deadhead suggested that she medicate with acid to cleanse the dark thoughts from her head, and then swim in the ocean to rinse the black film on her soul. This home remedy failed and a young life was lost within months of our meeting.

That incident occurred five years ago, but recent headlines surrounding the Grateful Dead have taken me back to that time and to my own days on tour. As the itinerant band celebrates an astonishing 30 years on tour, it has been dogged by misfortune — lightning struck fans earlier this summer at RFK Stadium in Washington, several dozen people were arrested outside a Dead concert in Albany and for the first time in three decades, a scheduled concert was canceled in Indiana for fear of crowd violence.

None of this can be directly attributed to the band itself, but the incidents are nonetheless beginning to expose a darker, more malevolent side of the Grateful Dead milieu. Contrary to the image laid out by the Deadheads themselves, life on tour these days is far from peace, love and smiles. Capitalism, greed and betrayal would be more apt descriptions.

Today's Deadheads wear the tie-dyed costumes of a past generation but aren't propelled by the same sense of moral rebellion. If bygone Deadheads were protesting war and social strife, today's seem only to be dissenters from real-world monotony. Unfortunately, like many of my generation's discontents, they are cynical, savvy and unhappy with their lives.

In my seven years as a devoted Deadhead — including two spent touring the country — I came to take for granted that people would steal from a friend's backpack and rationalize their actions. I saw friends sleep with other friends' partners. I saw young women sexually assaulted after being unwittingly dosed with acid. I saw someone give a friend's dog acid just to watch it lose its mind. I saw people stranded in a strange city because their friends were impatient to hit the road. I saw people trash their friends' motel rooms, knowing that they would not be held responsible for the damage.

With no legal system within the Deadhead culture, these injustices go unchallenged. Thankfully, violent acts of retribution have been few, but who knows if it will someday come to that? The common reaction when this sort of incident occurs is to get a bit meaner, shrewder and make a plan to do it back to someone else. Eventually, I came to dislike the music of the Dead because of the association I made between the band and its followers.

It would be unfair to imply that all of those on tour engage in such loathsome behavior. There are many who revel in the shows and demonstrate respect not just for their fellow Tourheads but for the cities they visit. Their sole desire is to immerse themselves in the music and peacefully co-exist with others who feel the same. But the dominant culture is not so sanguine.

In an attempt to escape the society they so disdain, the Deadheads have created a world underpinned by the same materialism and greed. Whether it be overpricing their wares or selling crack and ecstasy, the looming specter of capitalism rules supreme, and it is every bit as ruthless as that of the American mainstream.

Newcomers naive enough to think otherwise quickly have their misconceptions dispelled. I met quite a few 14- and 15-year-old kids who came to tour without a penny and thought they could turn to other Deadheads for support. Somehow, they thought money didn't hold the same relevance that it does elsewhere. But unless you're a Trust-fund Deadhead, sustained by the family fortune, everyone needs a scheme. Selling veggie sandwiches is one option, as is hawking jewelry or clothing. To make these businesses go, some Deadheads trek to Central America between tours to buy the Guatemalan jewelry and garb so popular among Dead followers. Others make their own products to sell. And with a steady flow of suburban kids who have the cash to spend on a $5 tofu burger and a $20 T-shirt, these entrepreneurs have an ideal location at Dead shows.

But these business ventures take a level of initiative and planning beyond what most Tourheads are willing to expend. More typically, people make just enough money to cover food, lodging, their concert ticket and enough gas to get to the next city. If you are not good at selling or at least scamming, you will not make it on tour. Many Deadheads, while professing distrust and disdain for the government, make it by accepting food stamps and other public hand-outs. A walk down the streets of Berkeley or San Francisco, a popular hub of between-tour activity, is evidence enough that many Tourheads are also adept at panhandling, although this is not a profitable choice for survival.

The drug trade is also an easy and rather lucrative route to sustenance. With perseverance, one can usually find suppliers of acid, mushrooms or ecstasy to resell, and the rising popularity of crack and heroin on tour is opening up new markets. There is the nuisance of undercover agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, to say nothing of fellow Deadhead narcs, but this can add an element of excitement to a new career — which for today's Deadheads is a tonic in itself.

ILLUSTRATION: ALICIA CZECHOWSKI

MY INITIATION to the Grateful Dead came in 1986 and coincided with the band's resurgence back then. I was in college and had been more interested in the Clash and Flipper than wearing bells on my shoes and tie-dyeing every white shirt I owned. But after going to a few shows I grew enchanted, with the band and with the hordes of colorfully attired people who seemed like happy children at recess. I worked every conceivable retail job to finance my indulgence, choosing positions where there was little commitment. With the money I had saved and the cushion of a few credit cards, I was able to traverse the country with relative financial security. It also helped that I had family that, though preferring I settle down and get a job, made clear that I could rely on them if things got desperate.

It might have been different had I joined the tour earlier. One retired Tourhead who requests anonymity for fear of losing a respectable job says the late 1980s ushered in a more amoral environment. "The demise of the Dead scene began in 1987 when going to shows became like going to some sort of pop scene," says this ex-Deadhead who himself was eventually scared away by the violence. He blames alcohol abuse for what he sees as an increased incidence of fighting, show-crashing and other disruptive behavior.

Today's version of tour is a mockery of what the original Dead followers created. There is an attempt to form family units, but too often they aren't bound together by loyalty and trust. The members travel together, bunk together and, theoretically, provide the love and support that one might bestow on a relative. And, to a degree, there is a sense of sharing: In spurts of generosity, one person or a few will support the others by buying the gas or paying for the motel room. But typically this generosity is born of necessity — everybody else is broke.

Rarely do the relationships that develop transcend each person's own selfishness. Usually, the break occurs over money — someone feels they've been cut out of a drug deal, or grows tired of supporting a parasitic family member.

To survive on tour, it helps to have emotions encased in steel. Courtesy is not mandatory and verbal assaults, rude comments and sexist remarks are common in the course of a motel room conversation. People refer to each other freely as "sister" or "brother" but there was rarely the accompanying intimacy. Practically everyone goes by a nickname — Woodstock, Scooter, Zeus, Rainbow, Jinx. Often, I never knew people's real first names, and rarely did I know their last. There was a degree of secrecy which supposedly stemmed from a paranoia of the law, but sometimes I wondered whether going by a fake name among friends was just a way of preventing anyone from getting too close.

So what's the beauty of it all? The question for many on tour is probably: What's the alternative?

"There is this core group of Tourheads who have dropped out of society and their only alternative is to follow the Dead," says Jill, another former Deadhead. These people live for tour to resume each season, but quickly grow disgusted. They boast of making enough money from the present tour to buy that land in Oregon and settle down. But more typically their money is blown on lavish hotel rooms, expensive meals, beer and drugs. Strung out and broke, they're left scrambling for someone to support them until tour begins again.

And so a cycle evolves: Many may want to try a new life but have become ensnared in the tour culture. Financially, they know no other way to make money other than selling wares on tour. Socially, whether they truly like them or not, the people on tour are the only friends they have. Alienated and fearful of what the real world is about, they settle into what they know best: The Dead.

EVERY TIME there is a scare that the Dead may stop touring, I find myself worrying about the lost souls who know nothing else but the parallel world of the Grateful Dead. Many are talented and have skills adaptable to the mainstream. It's those who use the Dead simply as an escape who will have difficulty adjusting to life without tour. Sadly, I cannot picture their future.

They will surely endure the loss of the Dead's live performances, but can they handle the end of tour? That possibility seems ever more real with the current malaise surrounding the band. As the amount of violence and police confrontation has grown, so have concerns about how to curtail it. A group calling itself Save Our Scene has formed in an attempt to quash disruptive behavior. And through newsletters and the Internet, band members have practically begged their fans to clean up their act. If they don't, the Dead will stop touring, or so they threaten.

In an open letter passed out to Deadheads at a recent St. Louis show and later posted on the Internet, the Dead told fans that "over the past 30 years we've come up with the fewest possible rules to make the difficult act of bringing tons of people together work well — and a few thousand so-called Dead Heads ignore these simple rules and screw it up for you, us and everybody."

Arguably, it is not the Tourheads who are responsible for the bad behavior, but local kids who view the parking lot at a Dead show as an invitation to party with complete abandon. Tourheads can blame the less devoted concert-goers, but it is these "outsiders" who buy the goods that sustain the Tourheads lifestyle. And it is the Tourheads who have created the atmosphere that is so appealing to revelers in the first place.

The Dead went on to say, "If you don't have a ticket, don't come. This is real. This is a music concert, not a free-for-all party."

To me, the issue of blame isn't really relevant. The real question is: How long did anyone think the party could last?

Carolyn Ruff, a Washington Post news aide, attended close to 100 concerts in her seven years following the Grateful Dead.

I came to take for granted that people would steal from a friend's backpack . . . I saw friends sleep with other friends' partners. I saw young women sexually assaulted after being unwittingly dosed with acid.

The Right Stuff

Kevin Phillips

TO RENEW AMERICA
By Newt Gingrich
HarperCollins. 260pp. $24

THE FREEDOM REVOLUTION
By Dick Armey
Regnery. 318pp. $24.95

THREE REPUBLICANS in Congress, all former professors at various Sun Belt colleges and universities, are now running for president or thinking about it. More immediately, two of them — House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia and House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas — have just published books to ponder America's future and promote their own.

By Gingrich's December 15 presidential-race deadline, the political and literary verdict should be in on To Renew America and the prescriptions for national revival that he tells about studying since he was a teenager. Armey's own acknowledged White House hopes are at least four years out.

Gingrich cannot be thrilled at his chief lieutenant's finishing his manuscript in time to compete with The Book of Newt. Not that Armey's tome is particularly weighty. It's a familiar brand of conservative Texanomics — guv'ment bashin', tax-cuttin', market-worshippin' and budget-balancin' — with phraseology presumably pre-tested and perfected in Rush Rooms from Galveston to Grand Prairie. Gingrich's book and persona are much more interesting: the conservative as a space-age optimist.

To the public, of course, Gingrich is the superstar: the architect of 1994's GOP victory and the most powerful House speaker in memory, albeit also the first described by voters as too extreme. He is a former assistant professor of history at West Georgia College and, earlier still, a troubled adolescent who married his high-school math teacher — in sum, an Interesting National Personality. HarperCollins was ready to pay $4.5 million for this book until Gingrich realized that an author's advance of that magnitude would be one personal ethics controversy too many.

Co-writer Bill Tucker has obviously spent many hours laboring over To Renew America but there are revealing Rorschach blots from Gingrich himself. The volume is readable, and it delivers a reasonably good synopsis of Gingrich's ideas, especially in the subsections that amplify ongoing issues from education to health care, space exploration, "corrections day," unfunded mandates and the failure of the entrenched Democratic leadership of the last Congress.

If there's a part of the new Republican agenda that a large majority of voters agrees with, it's in this area — reforming the House. Here Gingrich is entitled to sound his trumpet.

Renew, however, also spotlights some of the speaker's principal weaknesses. To start with, it is stuffed with Pollyannaish views of how technology will uplift politics, culture and public policy. By 2020, couples will be honeymooning in space. (Is this his next novel?) In 2005, meanwhile, "since most Americans now telecommute, rush hour [will be] dramatically smaller than it used to be," and telecommuting will also manage air pollution. Technology that adds one percent annually to economic growth will solve the deficit. As for health reform, "Surgeons may one day be able to operate by remote control". Alas, his gullibility in this genre is proven. On coming to Congress a decade and a half ago, he introduced legislation to set up statehood mechanisms for U.S. space colonies. None yet.

Technobabble is also useful in sidestepping practicality. In a number of situations, Gingrich rolls out a list of ideas without explaining how they can be turned into legislation, enacted or implemented and then wraps things up with deceptive grandiosity.

Not a few Capitol Hill insiders say that without Armey as chief operating officer, Newt himself would be in orbit half the time, and the book's opening and closing chapters will not reassure hard-boiled operatives. "I have spent much of my life studying and working on the problems of how civilizations survive. It began when I was surprisingly young," Gingrich tells us by page 10. In 1953, as a 10-year-old, he appeared before the Harrisburg, Pa., City Council to propose a municipal zoo, got his name in the paper and "was hooked forever on public life," But he still expected to be a zoo director or dinosaur specialist until 1958 when — at age 14 now — he got interested in the processes of national decay and concluded that "this was the kind of challenge that could not be passed off to others. If it were truly a moral question of whether we as a people would survive, then I had an obligation to do my share of the job." Two years later, crossing the Atlantic by ship, he reviewed and reaffirmed his commitment to "spending my life on such a burdensome historical quest." Ahem.

To Renew America blithely ignores the partial parallels and warnings of recent declining powers like Britain, the Netherlands and Spain in favor of vague citations of Mayan, Aztec and Chinese trends from Arnold Toynbee's A Study Of History, along with enthusiastic invocations of Isaac Azimov's three-part science-fiction series on the decline of the Galactic Empire.

Dick Armey, who used to teach at North Texas State, isn't likely to be well received by his fellow economists. His description of the flat tax, of which he is a prime advocate, is shallow enough to suggest that he understands that full detail will not reinforce his case. The Freedom Revolution concludes with Armey's Axioms, which include thoughts like "The market is rational and the government is dumb" and "Social responsibility is a euphemism for personal irresponsibility."

This not a book for which trees should have had to die. Compared with Armey, Gingrich is Oscar Wilde. But it's interesting that neither man has anything much to say about popular opinion, even though both had chances to update as late as April, and therein lies the political rub. The ultimate weakness in the Gingrich and Armey tracts is that they propound a new Congressional ideology on which Americans have been souring since January with unusual rapidity.

Back in December, a national majority of 52 percent to 28 percent approved of the congressional Republican policies and proposals. By March, that approval rating had fallen from 43 percent to 39 percent, and by mid-June disapproval led by 45 percent to 41 percent — a stunning turnabout.

GOP House members planning to take the two books to the beach had better take along a third compilation: details on the opinion polls cited above. Professors Gingrich and Armey may be about to orchestrate another right-wing faculty club first: helping a surprising number of their legislative pupils to flunk out in next year's home state electoral exams.

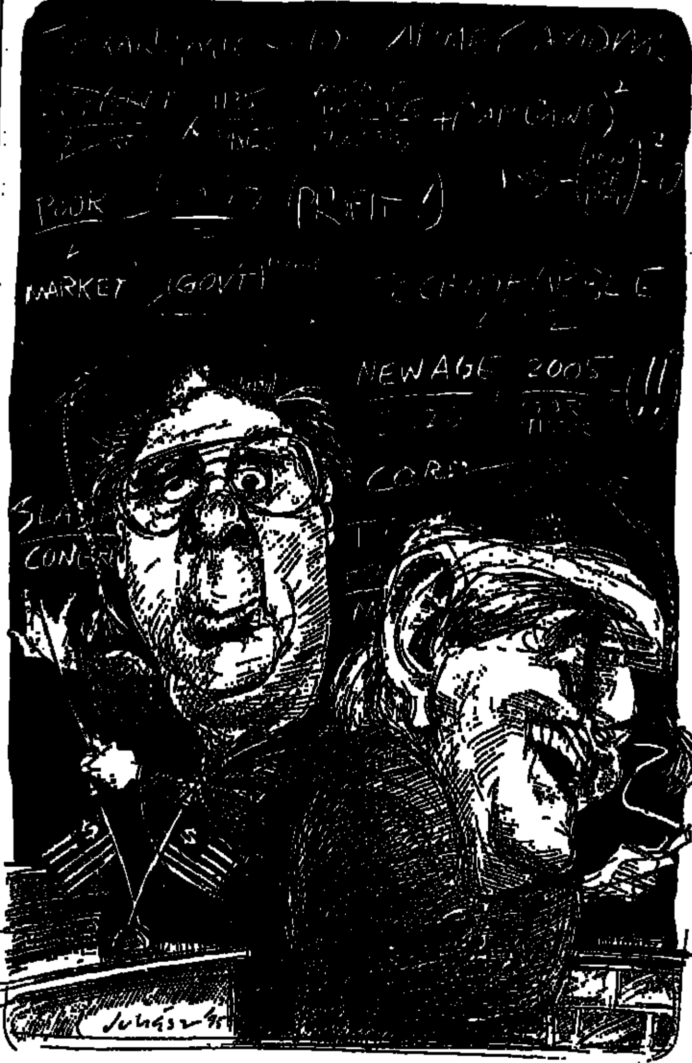


ILLUSTRATION: VICTOR JUHASZ

Labyrinth of Love

Ilan Stavans

THE DOUBLE FLAME
Love and Eroticism
By Octavio Paz
Translated from the Spanish by Helen Lane
Harcourt Brace. $276pp. $22

AT 81, OCTAVIO PAZ is incredibly active. He delivers speeches around the globe, edits a monthly literary magazine, and manages to publish a book every eight months or so. He keeps up with technological and scientific developments and regularly comments on current events, from the war in Bosnia to the peasant uprising in Chiapas. Happily, this stamina and youthful spirit also permeate his work. The central themes of The Double Flame, his latest title to be translated into English, are love and ardor, topics that might seem untimely for a man born at the outbreak of World War I. But the truth is that this book is a product of immense wisdom and patient observation, an approach to passion from the vantage point of maturity.

In many ways the volume is a summary of Paz's amazing odyssey as an essayist, spanning more than five decades. It is not a masterpiece like his two most celebrated titles: The Labyrinth Of Solitude, a 1950 study of the Mexican psyche, and Sor Juana Or The Traps Of Faith, an invaluable study of religion, poetry, womanhood and the baroque in colonial Mexico. Here he sets himself the task of understanding the modern concept of love by comparing it to those of previous ages. This could allow for sociological or anthropological explorations, but Paz's isn't a scientific dissertation. His journey through literature and the human imagination includes no statistics, no historical backup, no academic qualifiers. His is the voice of a poet, an intellectual poet enchanted with the labyrinthine paths of Western civilization.

Paz believes society is plagued by erotic permissiveness, placing the stability of love in jeopardy

He begins by exploring the link between poetry and eroticism, which has always been at the core of his own poetry, and then makes a sharp distinction between sex, eroticism and love: Sex, Paz claims, places humans in the animal kingdom and has reproduction as its goal; eroticism is a socialized form of sexuality transfigured by our dreams; and love is altogether more abstract, at once an amatory sentiment and a concept developed during a certain historical period. He rightly argues that, beginning with Freud, too many scholars have devoted themselves to the study of sexuality while feelings such as love and friendship, less visible, more evasive, remain largely unexplored.

Paz delves into the varieties of love throughout the ages, from courtly love to marital love, from the mystic's love of God to the 19th-century concept of patriotism as love for one's nation. And he devotes the last segment of The Double Flame to recent studies of the mind that, in his eyes, say very little about who we are and why we feel attracted to each other. His ultimate thesis: that our society is plagued by erotic permissiveness, placing the stability and continuity of love in jeopardy, and that the difficult encounter between two humans attracted to each other, has lost importance, a development that he believes threatens our psychological and cultural foundations.

Paz's prose is incisive, his verbal bravado arresting, and his knowledge enormous. His philosophical eye constantly invites readers to reevaluate their most mundane affections and to reexamine their approach to others of the same or opposite sex. He navigates with ease through intellectual history, pondering Buddhism, Taoism, Gnosticism, and the Bible, Greek and Hellenistic thinkers, and medieval, renaissance and modern artists. In one page he might be commenting on Santa Teresa of Jesus and in the next he is discussing Marquis de Sade, Murasaki Shikubu, Ramon Lopez Velarde and John Donne. (An index is urgently needed.) The volume's structure is deliberately capricious, allowing him to explore a theme for the sheer pleasure of it.

That, I think, is his greatest asset. Once Paz has chosen a topic, he lets his mind loose, totally free, and therefore he can be as excited and surprised by its findings as the reader. But this stylistic freedom can also work against him. He has a tendency to restate the obvious, as when he claims that "eroticism varies in accordance with climate and geography, with society and history, with individuals and temperaments."

He also enjoys aggrandizing his own stature, suggesting that he and he alone is the first to tackle a subject when, in fact, others have done so before him, including the French essayist Denis de Rougemont, whose 1939 book L'Amour et l'Occident covered much of Paz's territory and is Paz's inspiring text even if he doesn't always acknowledge it. Add to this the fact that on occasion he shies away from important topics, like homosexual love, and distorts other people's arguments to fit his scheme. But what's most annoying is the frequency with which he uses and abuses stereotypes, particularly on the issue of women lovers, as when he claims "Neither in history nor in literature are there many examples of friendship between women. This is not altogether surprising: for century after century — since the Neolithic, according to some anthropologists — women have lived in obscurity. What do we know of what the wives of Athens, the girls of Jerusalem, the peasant women of the twelfth century, of the bourgeoises of the fifteenth felt or thought? ... In relationships between women, backbiting, envy, gossip, jealousy, and petty perfidies are frequent. Which is almost certainly owing not to any inability of women but to their social situation. Perhaps their progressive liberation will change all this."

And yet, in spite of its infuriating innuendoes and grandiloquence, The Double Flame is a tour de force — generous, engrossing, insightful, rewarding, the testament to a portentous mind, a volume about ethos by an youthful old man. Its scope helps explain, once again, why Paz, Mexican by birth and cosmopolitan by education, is this century's intellectual conscience.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 13 1995

Japan looks down barrel of recession

The Japanese economy is in danger of spiralling down into a slump, writes **Edward Balls**

IF THE ghost of Lord Keynes is alive and active, it would be comforting to know he is keeping a close watch on recession-locked Japan.

It was Keynes who wrote, in his General Theory, that "practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from intellectual influences, are usually the slave of some defunct economist".

But the rapid slide of the Japanese economy from recession to 1930s-style slump powerfully demonstrates that Keynes's analysis of vicious deflationary spirals is far from defunct.

The turnaround in Japan's economic fortunes has been astonishing over recent years. The growth engine that powered ahead at 4 per cent a year in the 1980s hit the buffers in 1990. Since then, the Japanese population has been struggling to cope with recession for the first time in many decades.

But Japan is not suffering from a normal US- or UK-style recession. Its economy is on the verge of a dangerous deflationary spiral of falling consumer and asset prices, rising debts and falling output unseen in either the US or Europe in the post-war period.

Japan's policymakers have been consistently unwilling to recognise the scale of the problem and the need for dramatic action. Their repeated predictions of imminent recovery over the past five years have been consistently wrong. The central bank has been absurdly timid in the face of the growing property market and banking crisis following the 1990 stock market crash. The Ministry of Finance has, until recently, been unwilling to acknowledge the scale of the bad debts caused by real estate crisis in the banking sector. And, while willing initially to use fiscal policy in an attempt to kickstart the economy, even this dried last year.

But attitudes have now begun, at last, to change. The crisis in the property market as consumers have found themselves caught by "negative equity" has spread across the whole economy, and companies have been hit by the soaring yen. The extra ingredient, missing from the US and UK recessions, is the spread of asset price deflation to the general price level.

Consumer prices have been falling now for almost a year, at an estimated annual rate of 5 per cent. The result is to further increase the real value of debts facing consumers and banks, raising real interest rates on those debts and pushing many nearer to bankruptcy. Demand is depressed yet further as borrowing and spending contracts, thus deepening the deflationary cycle.

The authorities may have realised the seriousness of the problem too late. Belatedly they have allowed interest rates to tumble: the discount rate now stands at just 1 per cent, while market short rates are a mere two thirds of 1 per cent and long-term rates have fallen to below 3 per cent — a clear sign that investors expect the deflation to continue. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance has admitted that bad debts in the banking sector amount to more than $450 billion, equivalent to a tenth of national output,

Yet, as Keynes predicted in the General Theory, these are precisely the circumstances in which monetary policy is unlikely to be effective. First, there is a risk that interest rates might fall to a level beyond which investors do not believe they will fall further — the famous "liquidity trap". In these circumstances, trying to push them down further by pumping cash into the system is like "pushing on a piece of string". Japan has not reached this point quite yet, as Gavyn Davies points out in a recent Goldman Sachs circular. Recent liquidity injections by the central bank have pushed interest rates down. But the scope for forcing them down further may be very limited.

In any case, interest rate cuts are unlikely to halt a deflationary cycle in which consumers, companies and banks are unwilling to borrow or unable to lend. Whether Japan is in a liquidity trap or not, Keynes second insight still holds — when monetary policy is ineffective, fiscal policy is likely to be most potent. Public investment can also stimulate demand without forcing up interest rates and "crowding out" private investment. Moreover, when the crisis is linked to bad debts in the banking sector, focusing fiscal activism on bailing out bad debts to allow new lending makes sense.

Easy enough — if it were not for the psychological and political obstacles in Tokyo. Psychological, because using fiscal policy goes against the grain of Ministry of Finance theology, which well remembers the large deficits of the 1970s, worries about the fiscal implications of Japan's ageing population and deeply mistrusts the country's corrupt, pork-barrel politics. There is likely to be fiscal action in the summer, but it may not be dramatic.

But the greater obstacle to action is political. Public opinion in Japan is still strongly opposed to using taxpayers' money to bail out the bankers who, five years ago, were getting rich on cheap credit and are closely linked in the public mind to corruption.

And the Japanese public is right to be angry. Monetary policy may now be impotent, but the roots of the current crisis lie in the monetary policy errors of the late 1980s. When the crash came, it was the ordinary Japanese who bore the brunt of the downturn.

Anyone who doubts the destructive potential of monetary policy errors need look no further than today's Japan. Fiscal activism — including a properly policed bank bailout — is a necessary, if late and second-best solution. But, from the ordinary Japanese person's perspective, it would have been better if the original monetary policy mistakes had never been made — which should be a lesson to us all.

Nepal dam funds run dry

Mark Tran in New York

THE World Bank has dropped out of the controversial $1 billion Arun hydroelectric project for Nepal after conceding that the risks were too great for the scheme to proceed.

The decision by the Bank's new president, James Wolfensohn, marked a climbdown on a plan once seen as vital to its credibility as a financing partner for touchy power and infrastructure projects.

Set in a remote valley 200 miles east of Kathmandu, the project would have provided power for a country starved for electricity. But environmental groups vigorously opposed the Arun III scheme as too big and too expensive for Nepal's needs, and criticised the Bank for not giving enough thought to smaller and cheaper alternatives.

Mr Wolfensohn largely accepted the argument that Arun would have been too big for Nepal's own good, repudiating the views of those Bank officials who pushed hard for the project.

Environmental groups welcomed the decision. "His admission of the validity of the arguments of the critics of Arun certainly sends a strong signal to other aid donors that large dams are risky, expensive and destructive investments and that they should support smaller, more flexible, projects," said Lori Udall of the California-based International Rivers Network.

Visionary behind a banking nightmare

OBITUARY
Agha Hasan Abedi

AGHA HASAN ABEDI, the founder of the Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI), the Muslim success story that turned out to be a nightmare, has died aged 73.

For the last years of his life, Abedi had been enfeebled by two heart attacks, a stroke and other ailments. Abedi's condition had spared him from the fallout of the Bank's collapse in 1991, and from the discovery of its unorthodox activities — money laundering, bankrolling terrorists, and cheating small businessmen, many of them British Asians, and other depositors out of $15 billion.

When he died, he was wanted for trial in the United States, and to serve an eight-year sentence for fraud delivered last summer by a court in Abu Dhabi. Pakistan had refused, however, to extradite him. But while reviled in the West, for many of his countrymen the deterioration of a vital businessmen who delighted in wearing sharp suits was punishment enough.

Starting in 1972 with a $2.5 million investment by the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Abedi built BCCI into an international financial force. He steered clear of countries with strict banking controls, and based the bank in Luxembourg. At its peak in the 1980s, the bank had 14,000 employees, 400 offices in 72 countries, 1.3 million depositors and more than $20 billion in assets — at least on paper.

Abedi insisted he had done nothing wrong, and his friends continued to defend him. However, investigators accused Abedi and his cohorts of frittering away depositors' money on lavish hunting trips and other perks intended to win favour with powerful politicians.

Abedi . . . hero and villain

Abedi was born in Lucknow, northern India, where his Shi'ite Muslim ancestors had been advisers to feudal landlords. His family emigrated in 1947 when Pakistan was carved out of British India. He went into banking, joining India's Habid Bank. In 1959, he founded the United Bank Ltd (UBL), which became Pakistan's second biggest bank, and one of the first non-Arab banks to open a branch in Abu Dhabi, long before the oil boom. Abedi left UBL when it was nationalised in the early 1970s.

Abedi's last formal links with the BCCI were severed in October 1990, when he sold his interest to his original backer, but illness had brought his jet-setting life to a close in 1988.

Keith Vaz, MP, adds: I led a delegation of BCCI staff and depositors to see Abedi in Pakistan in August 1991, six weeks after the bank closed, to see if he and other senior officers would be prepared to co-operate to try to help the authorities discover where the missing billions had gone.

At home, with his beautiful and attentive wife Rabia, he exuded considerable charm and charisma, although he was frail. He spoke of his vision of creating a bank to assist Third World countries, to give the poorer nations of the world a chance to network with the big league countries. He said the problems of the bank had occurred after his removal, and he blamed unidentified "others" for the failings. Despite being the bank's founder and former chief executive, he took no responsibility.

He had plans to open a bank in Pakistan and to write a book to set the record straight. Neither materialised. He surprised the delegation by asking to join the campaign for compensation for the depositors and staff, and by agreeing to meet the Serious Fraud Office, even offering to put them up in his house. His parting words were that there was no real need for the bank to close and that the only people who would benefit from the closure would be the liquidators and lawyers.

Suzanne Goldenberg

Agha Hasan Abedi, banker, born May 14, 1922; died August 5, 1995

In Brief

THE Post Office has begun a drive to take control of at least $150 million of United States mail business in four American cities by 1998 and double its US operation to $30 million by the end of this year.

NINE UK concrete suppliers, including RMC, Tarmac, Redland and Hanson, have been fined a record total of £8.4 million, after the Restrictive Practices Court ruled they had been illegally involved in local cartels and found them guilty of contempt of court.

UP TO 1,800 jobs are to be created following the announcement that Siemens, the German electronics group, is to invest $1.8 billion in a semiconductor plant in north-east England.

CANADIAN developer Paul Reichmann has teamed up with Saudi prince Alwaleed Bin Talal and a group of other investors in an estimated $1.1 billion offer to buy Canary Wharf from the consortium of banks that took over the London development after it went into administration three years ago.

GENERAL Motors announced one of the biggest spin-offs in history as it moved to free Electronic Data Systems, the company it bought from the Texas billionaire Ross Perot in 1984 for $2.4 billion. The firm is now valued at $21 billion.

TRAFALGAR House has decided to abandon its $1.9 billion takeover bid for Northern Electric. Chief executive Nigel Rich announced that the review of pricing by the electricity regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, had tipped the balance.

FIRST QUARTER profits at British Airways surged by 57 per cent to £135 million on turnover of £1.9 billion. The results saw the airline break through two records, notching up its best first quarter result at the operating level — where profits hit £194 million — and filling 73.5 per cent of available seats.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates July 31	Sterling rates August 7
Australia	2.1631-2.1659	2.1595-2.1623
Austria	15.51-15.54	15.83-15.86
Belgium	45.49-45.59	46.28-46.34
Canada	2.1858-2.1899	2.1726-2.1748
Denmark	8.59-8.60	8.72-8.73
France	7.63-7.64	7.76-7.77
Germany	2.2114-2.2146	2.2511-2.2533
Hong Kong	12.35-12.30	12.40-12.41
Ireland	0.9698-0.9723	0.9749-0.9767
Italy	2,540-2,544	2,528-2,531
Japan	140.89-141.14	145.95-146.91
Netherlands	2.4807-2.4840	2.5212-2.5244
New Zealand	2.374-2.377	2.521-2.524
Norway	9.75-9.81	9.92-9.93
Portugal	230.90-231.63	233.54-233.85
Spain	190.10-190.39	191.89-192.84
Sweden	11.27-11.29	11.36-11.38
Switzerland	1.8368-1.8398	1.8625-1.8619
USA	1.5974-1.5984	1.6028-1.6038
ECU	N/A	1.2083-1.2100

FTSE100 Share index down 30.3 at 3499.8. FTSE 250 index up 43.7 at 3969.7. Gold up $0.75 at $384.95.

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For further details on either of the above posts please send a large stamped addressed envelope to the Overseas Personnel & Development Department, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ. Please quote the appropriate reference number when applying. Closing date: 8 September 1995. Interviews: mid September 1995.

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Further details may be obtained from Director of Personnel, University of Durham, Old Shire Hall, Durham, DH1 3HP, tel: 0191 374 7258, fax: 0191 374 7253, e-mail.Acad.Recruit@durham.ac.uk. Closing date for completed applications is 1 September 1995. Please quote reference number A467.

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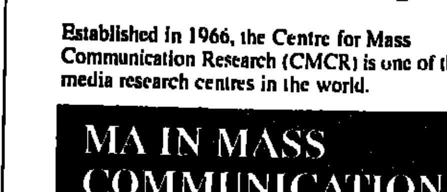
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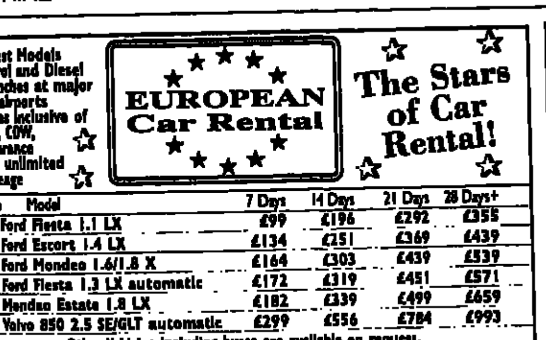
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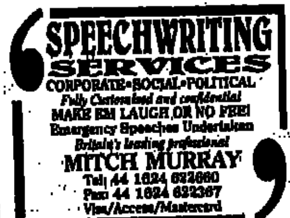
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A Country Diary

Henrik Deichmann

NEWFOUNDLAND: By the end of July we have the rewards of a mild winter and an early spring. Horse-high moose amble out of sight among the flowering cow parsnip. Along the shore, sheep are hidden in the swards of blue flag. Rose bushes in settlers' seaside gardens spill over with blooms of white, soft pink and rich red. Everywhere young forest birds pester with pleading calls. Food is so plentiful that a robin was seen to begin a new clutch of eggs the day the first brood left the nest. The current year offspring of ducks are early to wing, and nearly as strong as the adults.

On the windswept mountains of the long range, mercifully fly-free caribou calves are vigorous and svelte, easily following their dames over the most unforgiving heaths and fens. Sedge meadows are positively verdant. Soft rains and showers pulse life into the rivers, stirring schools of bright salmon and silver sea trout to their upstream origins. Nature is showing a beneficent side after a series of cold and miserable summers. And all those seeds and berries augur well for a good winter for wildlife.

Kitchen sink classics

OBITUARY
Susie Cooper

SUSIE COOPER, one of the most important figures in the history of 20th century British ceramics, has died aged 92.

Born into a world where girls were only expected to paint pretty patterns on china, while men ran the business, she was one of the few women to create, design and run her own pottery company, which at its height employed 250 people.

In a career that spanned seven decades, Cooper pioneered new ceramic techniques, shapes and patterns. She supplied customers from royalty downwards with tableware that was modern, stylish, functional and reasonably priced. "I wanted to do nice things for people who had taste, but not the money to satisfy it," she explained with a typical lack of pretension.

Today, many of these "nice" things are regarded as classics of the period, and the elegant "leaping deer motif" that Cooper made her trademark in 1932 has become one of the icons of 20th century design.

Susie Cooper was born in Burselm, Staffordshire, the youngest of seven children. When her father, a farmer, died in 1914, Cooper left school to help run the family business. As a child she had "always been kept good with a box of paints" and at 17 she enrolled in an evening class at Burselm Art School. The fee for her first term was 10 shillings which, as she proudly noted, was the most she ever spent on her art education. She was offered a scholarship to complete her course and in 1922 was taken on as an assistant designer by Gray's pottery in Hanley.

The lustreware and brightly painted cubist-style works she produced at Gray's are today considered her most collectable pieces, although Susie came to regard them with some disdain.

In 1929, with a loan from her family, Cooper set up her own factory.



She was able to design her own shapes and abandon the "crude colours that everyone wanted in the late twenties", in favour of simple patterns and a restrained palette. Her works combined elegance and utility and were much in demand. Her famous Dresden spray design, created in the mid-1930s and purchased by Edward VIII from Peter Jones for Mrs Simpson was to remain in constant production for 25 years.

During this period Cooper had little time for a life beyond work. She never much wanted a husband but nevertheless, she married the architect Cecil Barker in 1938. Four years later, her factory was closed by a devastating fire and in 1943, aged 41, she gave birth to her son, Tim.

The factory reopened in 1945 and she moved from pottery to bone-china and continued to pioneer new designs, including the famous "Can" shape, launched in 1955, and epitomised by the tall, cylindrical coffee pot. Her linear ceramics captured the spirit of the fifties. In 1966 the business was taken over by Wedgwood with Cooper responsible for some lines. Nevertheless, her relationship with the company was not entirely happy and she retired at 83.

Cooper spent her last years on the Isle of Man, sharing a house with her son Tim (her husband died in 1972).

Cooper pioneered new ceramic techniques PHOTO: WEDGWOOD

She had a delicate and fragile appearance that was belied by a pair of large, capable hands and a truly awesome energy. Well into her nineties she was still producing new designs, work from a studio that was at the top of five steep flights of stairs.

Madeleine Marsh

Susie Cooper, ceramic designer, born October 29, 1902; died July 28, 1995

Letter From Pakistan Michael Binnie

The fairy queen

IT IS NOT every school boy who can claim to be the son of the Fairy Queen but this would be no idle boast by six-year-old Suja u Rehman, a pupil at our school. His mother is the celebrated Pari-Khan of this remote valley of Chitral. One afternoon I set off to meet her with my friend, Khuda Panna. She lives on top of a hill with a perfectly ordinary husband and four quite normal children, including little Suja. She tends the sheep and cows, makes cheese in a goat's skin bag. She lives like any other local woman except that people come from all over to seek her advice and to ask the unaskable.

We were greeted at the door by her husband. A woman appeared. She had a warm face with a ready, toothy smile. We entered the house and she left to prepare tea. Her husband sat with us on the floor, an unshaven, heavy-browed man. Should he kill a chicken? No, please, we said. Tea soon appeared and with it five hard-boiled eggs. I ate one. They pressed me to eat some more. I forced down another. Children peered round the doorway and ran away, giggling.

After tea, Pari-Khan ceremoniously washed her hands, then sat on a stool in front of us and lit a joss stick. No one spoke. "She is waiting for the fairies to enter her," said Khuda Panna. Then the three of them started to chat casually and I watched her. She wiped her face with a shawl, scratched a bare ankle, looked at her watch, threw a remark or two into the conversation, wiped her face again, sighed and gazed out into the distant view of jagged mountains. Another silence.

Then, suddenly, she cracked her fingers, her body gave a little shudder and, in a change of register, she started to, as it were, speak in tongues. She asked what we wanted of her. I asked about our new school. With eyes closed she raised her hands above her head and rubbing the palms together she produced a small object which she handed to Khuda Panna. She pronounced that the school would have ultimate success after some initial opposition.

Was there anything else I wanted to know? I then asked about the happiness and well being of one of my children, as yet unmarried. She assured me that all would be well and raising her hands again she produced a little soft object about the size of a small grape. She handed it to me and told me to keep it safely.

We had no more questions and Pari-Khan disengaged herself from her fairy mode. We made noises about leaving and I pressed a bundle of rupees into her hand. Soon we were striding back down into the valley. It had been curiously unexciting. I asked my friend what he made of it.

"If you want my true answer, I do not believe. Look, this thing is available in the bazaar." I examined my magical object. It was a piece of tightly knotted plastic. Inside was a dab of paste, possibly flour and water.

"Perhaps one day I take my one cow and put it with my neighbour's cow. Then I come to Pari-Khan and say someone has taken my cow. Where is it? Then if she say you yourself have put the cow in another place, then maybe I will believe. One time a child disappeared in our village and the father asked her, 'Where is my child?' and Pari-Khan is saying, 'You have no need of worry, he will come back.' Then they find the child drowned in the river. How can we believe this Pari-Khan? But the poor people, the uneducated, they believe."

"So will you throw away this plastic thing?"

He gave a roar of laughter. "Sir, what can I say? She is Pari-Khan."

I, too, still have my piece of bazaar plastic sitting on a shelf.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT was the cause of the first environmental protest in Great Britain? When did it occur?

KING CANUTE'S attempt to stem the tide. — *Tim Jones, Oxford*

THE FIRST protest by the contemporary environmental movement in the UK took place on May 9, 1971, when the newly-launched Friends of the Earth dumped about 950 bottles outside the Cadbury Schweppes headquarters in London, as a protest against the introduction of non-returnable bottles. This action, and many others around the world, had been inspired by Earth Day on April 22, 1970.

However, environmental protest goes back much further. There were many protests about pollution around the new industrial cities in the 19th century, including some by rural landowners aghast at the damage done to their forests. Many protests were related to land rights and had a clear environmental focus. The "Possessioning of Otmoor", which took place near Oxford in the 1820s as a protest against enclosures, is an example of early direct action. — *Chris Church, London*

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "spitting image"?

THE IDEA is that the progeny is so like the parent that it is as if it had been spat out by them. It dates from the early 17th century: "He's e'en as like thee as th' had'st spit him" (Source: Eric Partridge's Dictionary Of Historical Slang). — *Adrian Murphy, London*

ARE THERE any reports of birds having been struck by lightning while in flight?

I REMEMBER my mother telling me that her cat was struck by lightning (and killed) in her arms. Apparently the lightning came through the kitchen window, hit the kettle on the stove and ricocheted to the cat in her arms. Thank goodness for the cat or I would have been little more than a gleam in my father's eyes. — *Heather Noble, Tasmania, Australia*

WILL life after death ever be proven scientifically?

SCIENTIFIC proof requires repeated and impartial observation of events through our senses, and rigorous repeatable experimentation. Happenings such as the departure of the immortal soul from the body transcend time and space and are amenable neither to our sense organs nor experimental manipulation. Life after death is not therefore provable scientifically. — *Michael Dearden, Lancashire*

WHAT do Japanese/Chinese computer keyboards look like if they have hundreds of letters in their alphabet?

TRADITIONAL typewriters had a few thousand characters arranged on little blocks in a massive frame like a printing press. These were classified by the structure of each character: the typist would operate a lever which swooped down to snatch up the block before carrying it to the paper and printing it. Estimated typing speed: 2 characters (equivalent to one English word) in 10 seconds, even with years of practice.

The approach in computers is to type in the pronunciation phonetically and let software present various options to decide which homonym is intended. For example, I would type in N-I-H-O-N and it would ask me if I mean "Japan" or "two books". Speeds can reach a character a second.

The keyboard is often almost identical to PC keyboards used for English — indeed some people use ordinary English keyboards to write in Japanese. — *Ben Jones, Kent*

JAPANESE computer keyboards are the normal qwerty type only they come equipped with a magic conversion button to the right of the space bar. To produce Japanese text you first type in romanised Japanese and then press the conversion button, at which the software package automatically converts the text into Japanese script. The conversion process is however not infallible; it often falls down when transcribing homonyms, of which there are many in Japanese. On one particularly capricious day it decided to transcribe the word *kancho*, meaning government office, with the characters for enema. Needless to say, I forgot to proof read that day. — *Mark Summers, Ishikawa, Japan*

Any Answers?

WHEN equal and opposite sound waves meet, the result is silence. If the same principle were applied to frequencies in the optical range would we get darkness? — *Nigel Cooper*

AS CHILDREN growing up in the 1950s we always touched our collars for luck when an ambulance passed. Is this only an East Enders custom, and how did it originate? — *Barbara Rodgers, Sheffield*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Notes & Queries Volume 5 is now available, published by Fourth Estate, price £6.99

Dancing to the music of DNA

Richard Dawkins has become Professor of Public Understanding of Science. But can he reconcile us to his bleak truths about God, asks **Megan Tresidder**

THE BIOLOGIST, Dr Richard Dawkins, has just been made Professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford, a chair personally funded by Charles Simonyi of Microsoft. There are many reasons why this is a brilliant appointment, but Dawkins's critics reckon it has flaws too.

Dawkins is a superb communicator. His books, The Selfish Gene, The Blind Watchmaker and his latest best-seller, River Out Of Eden, are some of the best books ever written on science. Dawkins writes beautifully and clearly, navigating you through subjects like genetics that you may have despaired of ever understanding. He wins literary prizes as well as scientific ones and his arguments are so forceful that readers have actually written to say he made them abandon religion.

He has good looks (the Tom Stoppard of zoology), which adds to his success. But he also has a reputation as a bully, firing off letters to newspapers to hector opponents. He has described religious belief as "a virus". His critics accuse him of an unscientific lack of doubt, of being messianic in his Darwinism. He is often called a militant atheist. "Well, I'm also an afairyist," he says. "But there's no need to be a militant afairyist, because one is not constantly beset by people banging on about fairies."

He lives in Oxford, where he has worked for most of his life. He shares a New College flat with his wife, Lalla Ward. Dawkins is a small, elegant 54-year-old, and like his books, is breathtakingly articulate and self-assured. His manner is both charming and testy, in the politest possible way. He is a master at the put-down — a favourite word is "silly" — but he is even better at inspiring you, which makes you forgive him his trespasses, several times over.

He takes up his new post in October, on top of his current one as Oxford's Reader in Zoology. The new job will mean writing more books and giving more public lectures. He is less keen to be used as a pundit every time a science story, like the latest one about falling sperm counts, hits the headlines.

"I am uneasily aware that I may be phoned up to comment on such issues but — not wanting to sound pretentious about this — I have a more cosmic view of science, which is timeless and doesn't depend on what happens to be in the week's news. I write about the deep questions of existence. It's a different understanding of science from those who are interested in the relationship of science to technology, or why non-stick frying pans work."

What he will do best is what he does in his books, finding brilliant metaphors for complex ideas. In one phrase — The Selfish Gene — he expressed the whole theory of modern Darwinism: that evolution is driven by the fight for survival, not of species or of individuals, but of genes, who simply use our bodies as vehicles in the relentless fight for self-replication.

In his latest book, he uses the metaphor of a river to explain the flow through time of DNA, the genetic messenger. The discovery of DNA, he says, means that Darwinism can be retold digitally; there is no need for any other explanation of the universe beyond that of the selfishness of the gene. There is "no design, no purpose, no evil and good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference . . . DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music."

It is wonderful stuff, which in beautiful prose answers a lot of questions about how we came to be. But Dawkins is not so good on the "why" questions that the public might want answered. He is scornful of debate about the existence of God. Last year, he said religious people confronted with science were "know-nothings" and "no contests".

"Scorn," he says now, "was very probably a tactical error. I am going to have to clean up my act perhaps. I do value clarity of thought and so when people ask a why question, I do rather briskly demand to know what they mean by it."

"So if I ask why I am here?"

"My answer to that would depend on what you mean by that question," says Dawkins. "If you mean what is the ultimate purpose for my existence, that is a question that should never be put — a question that doesn't deserve an answer."

"Why not?"

"To put it slightly closer to the knuckle, when someone suffers a dreadful tragedy, the natural response is to ask, why me? What have I done to deserve this? But you have done nothing to deserve it. And your question — why I am here? — really only means something if you are religious. The onus is on religious people to prove their point of view, not on me. Unless there is a good reason to assume that something exists, you're better off assuming that it doesn't."

Even if he can't offer an alternative answer? In his new book, he writes that in the beginning, there was "the arising of some kind of self-copying system . . ."

A bit woolly, that "arising", isn't it?

"When something happened 4,000 million years ago you would surely not expect me to fill in every last detail of what happened? You could ask me about how a car works and I could describe it generally but I might not be able to say exactly how the first spark is made. Would you then say that must mean it comes from God?"

Is he interested in finding out about the first spark in the universe? "No. I don't think that is a particularly interesting stage in the process. Other people do and they are working on it . . . Well, of course it is interesting," he corrects himself, "but in some people's minds it is inflated as the great mystery.

"But every step in evolution has an element of chance. The origin of life, of the first self-replicating entity, was one of those chance processes. The origin of sex is another. I don't particularly want to study the origin of life. I would rather study the origin of sex."



Richard Dawkins: 'I have a more cosmic, timeless view of science . . . I write about the deep questions of existence' PHOTO: MARTIN ARGLES

Does he actually enjoy provoking controversy?

"Not much," he says, a little doubtfully. "I would much rather open people's eyes to the wonders of the world they have been born into. We get jaded, don't we, because it all becomes so familiar?"

There is a theory about Dawkins, that he must have had a traumatic experience with religion to have ended up so ferociously against it, but he denies that. He was born in Kenya and moved to Britain when small, when his father — a biologist — inherited a farm in Oxfordshire. Dawkins attended church as a child but rejected it in his teens, when he discovered Darwinism. He says there was no blinding flash. Quite the contrary, since he was at first tempted to reject Darwinism as too simple, which may be why Darwinism emerged so late.

"When you think of how fantastically simple an idea it is compared to the ideas of the Greeks, of Newton, of the great philosophers, it is astonishing that it took until the 19th century to emerge. But maybe it was because of the sheer audacity of explaining the prodigious complexity and beauty of living things by such a simple principle."

DAWKINS thinks the reason why Darwinism is still challenged today is that its critics are too literal about applying the theory of natural selection to our sophisticated selves. "If you went back a million years to our ancestors in Africa — to Homo Erectus — you probably would have been satisfied that natural selection explained everything about them. Now we are feather-bedded away from the cutting edge of natural selection in all sorts of ways."

But that doesn't mean, he explains, that natural selection is a bankrupt idea. It just means that the original rules are operating in a new environment. Sex with contraception makes no earthly Darwinian sense, "until you realise that it is a good rule of thumb that we should enjoy sex. Lust works as a rule of thumb in the wild and therefore we have lust."

Sometimes, the rules go wrong — as when a moth flies into a candle, mistaking it for the rays of the moon, by which it sets its compass. Dawkins has an idea involving moths. He will one day take a computer with a touch-activated screen into the garden. On the screen, there will be abstract computerised images which could, with improvement, look like flowers. He will wait for moths to alight on the screen and choose the most potentially flower-like images, editing out the less satisfactory ones. Leaving aside the obvious cheap point that the whole thing has had to be set up by him, playing God, he says it could be vivid proof of evolution by information selection.

Could it be then, accepting Dawkins's model of life as nothing but the flow of bytes, that God is a computer? That is the suggestion in a book by Frank Tipler, the physicist, who argues that God will reveal himself at the point of infinite, digital knowledge.

"If you define God as a being of vastly greater intelligence than you or I, God could be a computer or a superior being on another planet," says Dawkins. "That would be wonderful. I wouldn't want to call it God because of all the other associations. But that something would be the end-product, which had come about through a long process of evolution. I don't mind how complicated, how all-knowing, how all-powerful that something might be — if it was the end-product of evolution — because we would have an explanation of how it came into existence. But God is usually taken to mean something that was there at the beginning, another matter entirely."

A matter on which there is no doubt where he stands. Does Dawkins accept that he is a scientist who is particularly free of doubt?

"No," he says. "I have deep, deep questions about the origins of consciousness. It is very difficult to even think of what it means, let alone how natural selection favoured it. No, it is just that my doubts are confined to more interesting questions than the existence of God."

Why we're in a hole lot of trouble

The depletion of the ozone layer is increasing. **Celia Locks** reports

A DECADE after its existence was first revealed in a scientific paper, the ozone hole over Antarctica is still getting deeper, according to a new report.

"We're still seeing increasing ozone depletion during the Antarctic spring, every spring," says Jonathan Shanklin, a meterologist at the British Antarctic Survey and one of the authors of both the original and the new reports.

The BAS, which is based in Cambridge, estimates that the amount of ozone over its Halley research station during the Antarctic spring has fallen to less than 40 per cent of what it was in the 1960s. It takes its measurements by looking at the amount of ultraviolent light from the sun, and then working out the amount of ozone. Normally ozone in the stratosphere blocks harmful ultraviolet rays, which can cause genetic damage in micro-organisms such as plankton, and skin cancers and cataracts in humans.

"There is strong evidence," says Shanklin, "that when the ozone hole passes over the Falkland Islands they get more cases of bad sunburn."

Scientists are investigating the effects of increased ultraviolet light on plankton and krill, at the bottom of the Antarctic food chain. It appears that when the ozone hole goes over the southern oceans the productivity of the plankton decreases; this would directly affect the rest of the food chain up to penguins, seals and whales.

The ozone hole is caused by man-made chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons (used in fridges, air-conditioning units and foam). "There are some signs for optimism in that the Montreal Protocol and its amendments have led to a decrease in very simple CFCs in the atmosphere," Shanklin says. "By the end of this decade the protocol will be really biting, and the amount of chlorine in the atmosphere won't be going up any more."

And so what happens now? The ozone hole has given us a warning, suggests Shanklin, who, with colleague Anna Jones, disclosed the new data in the journal Nature. "It's very easy to change the atmosphere dramatically and we should be aware of the potential danger of greenhouse warming — the emission of things like methane and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

"The general scientific consensus is that there will be a rise in temperature. I wouldn't say that the recent hot spell has anything to do with that, but it's symptomatic. It's not definitely because of greenhouse warming, but the finger is pointed in that direction. Although scientists are not certain about the overall effects of global warming we know it is going to occur, and it's better to be safe than sorry."

Field of dreams

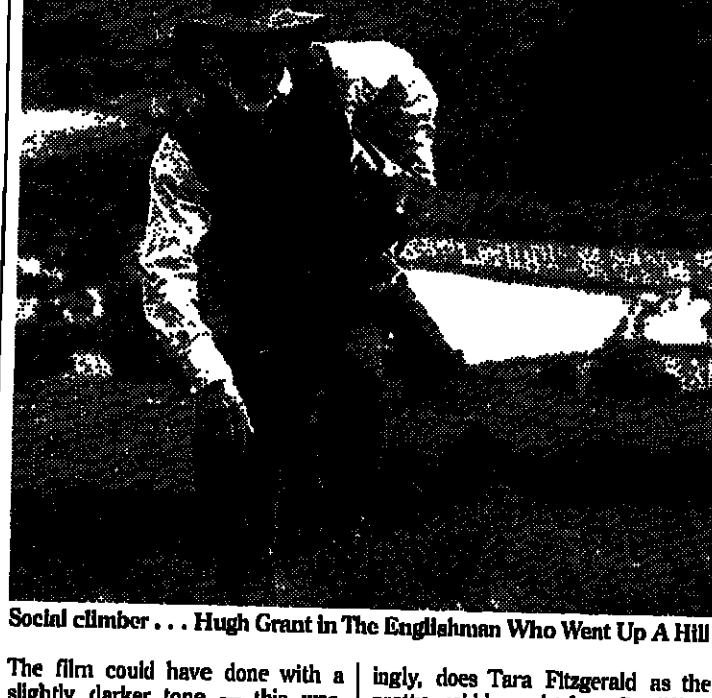
CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

CHRIS MONGER, the writer-director of The Englishman Who Went Up A Hill But Came Down A Mountain, once made an existential thriller called Voice Over, which was shown at the Edinburgh Festival and was radical enough to suggest that the last thing he would do would be to escape Wales for Los Angeles to make films. But that's eventually where his career took him, where he made the interesting Walting For The Light with Shirley Maclaine and Teri Garr.

Though he has also made British films, such as Just Like A Woman, it is nice to see him back again in his native country, though the present movie is as far from Voice Over as it is possible to get. It could, in fact, do wonders for the Welsh Tourist Board, since it relies more on charm than spikiness — like a watered down version of Dylan Thomas in his slightly saucy village tale mood.

The Englishman is, of course, Hugh Grant who appears, with the excellent Ian McNeice, as one of two cartographers engaged in measuring the local landmark of the village of Ffynnon Garw. This is important to the locals since if the hump is 1,000ft it qualifies as the first Welsh mountain, and if it's less it's merely a hill.

The time is 1917 when most of the able-bodied are away at the war and those left behind are engaged in the war effort. But Ffynnon Garw becomes everyone's obsession — the trick is to build it up to the required height while preventing the Englishmen from leaving for home.


Social climber . . . Hugh Grant in The Englishman Who Went Up A Hill

The film could have done with a slightly darker tone — this was, after all, a miserable time for any Welsh mining community. But Monger goes all out for the kind of eccentric comedy Americans often say we can do better than they can and loses the opportunity to do more than hint at something deeper.

The writing of Ian Hart's part as Johnny Shellshocked, a young war veteran who is finally persuaded out of a catatonic state by the mountain-making, is a case in point. There's very little there to twist the guts a bit. The result is a pleasing but lightweight film, saved by Vernon Layton's cinematography, which makes it look a treat, and by a cast that manages to play Welsh (and English) stereotypes so that they appear just this side of parody.

Grant, who is decidedly more than a pretty face when it comes to timing a line (provided the line is worth timing), and McNeice do everything asked of them. And so, more surprisingly, does Tara Fitzgerald as the pretty maid brought from Cardiff by publican Morgan The Goat (Colm Meaney) to dally with the former.

Nobody plays badly, and Kenneth Griffith as the Reverend Jones gives the kind of expert cameo that might well land him in the lap of Hollywood as one of those cherishable Brit character actors they are always going on about.

The trouble is that the joke, which is explained away in the title, begins to pall two-thirds of the way through and starts to need the stronger direction Monger might have given it were he not so determined to make a film that induces chuckles rather than thought. There's absolutely nothing wrong with a Welsh comedy, but one without a little more iron in its soul, *pace* Dylan Thomas, would have served us better.

But, as it is, the film is warm, friendly and good fun — which will be quite enough for most people.

Game, set and match in the Highland glens

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE HIGHLANDS were waving at you distractingly over the shoulder of The Gamekeeper (BBC1). The view belongs to the Duke of Atholl. Glen Tilt looks like a rolling, green sea broken by the black backs of whales. Here and there the whales are flashed with white where snow lies from December to June.

The duke owns 148,000 acres and has the unique right to raise his own army. This is one of Queen Victoria's underrated little jokes.

His head keeper is Charlie Pirie. Charlie disna reckon book learning. "A lot of these guys kid themselves on that they're gamekeepers but, when it come to the real thing out here, they know nothing. They've read it all in papers and books and things. Guys in the city learn in books and very seldom get the chance to put their ideas into practice. Occasionally you get someone who can crack it but not really, not really. They try very hard but they still havna got it."

There seems nothing for it but to shoot yourself. And Charlie ("Safety catch! Safety catch!") wouldn't be surprised if you did.

You'd be looking at Charlie for some time before the phrase "modest to a fault" occurred to you. "Blacksmith, welder, deer stalker, mountain rescue, sheep rescue. You name it, we can do it. To the best of our ability. We're Jack of all trades, master of most."

He has two sons, or possibly dogs, called Mark and Bob, and a ginger-headed trainee, Paul. Paul came straight from school and is in some awe of Charlie. "He's strict. He keeps you on the right lines. 'Do this!' and you're doing it. You don't muck this man around. I can understand how he's serious about his job because there's a lot of guns around. One mishap could be a life or a death."

He himself has missed Charlie by a whisper. Accidentally, I'm sure.

The only crack in Charlie's hard man image is that he evidently has Frosties for breakfast. Frosties? Look, I won't go on about this, Charlie. Just see to it that next time there's a packet of porridge oats on the table. The one with the chap in the vest chucking rocks about.

Poor Paul ended up in bed with 'flu and Lucozade. "Lying in the hills day after day and night after night, I think it gets to you eventually."

Paul had been lying on the moor looking for grouse. The flaw in this was that there were no grouse. Charlie was in a state of sturdy despair about it. "It's verra puir. What we're coming across is big patches with no grouse on it at all. We've spied this part of the moor. We've walked it in line with dogs. It's so disappointing. It's just out of control."

Perhaps they'd all buggered off to the bright lights of Perth? Bit of food, bit of warmth, hardly anyone trying to blow your head off.

Charlie thought it might be foxes. The sound of his shot ricocheted around the hills and boxed your ears. It was a clean, professional kill. He stroked the little marmalade head. The mouth gaped as if howling. He said: "It's a vixen. Believe me, it's a beautiful animal but it's a vicious brute. It hoovers up all the young grouse. So that's well rid, well out of the way. People will ob-ously say 'What a shame for it' but they are not up here and see what these animals can do. They're absolutely professional killers. Pr-fessional killers."

I was greatly cheered recently by UK Gold, the cable and satellite channel. They said their press officer was not available because she was escorting Eldorado celebrities around town. You could take that sort of message as a tonic.

Everybody got a pencil? Go. Simmer down now. Name me three Eldorado celebrities.

Well, two then.

One?

The dog?

With a sense of humour which does them credit, UK Gold are running **Eldorado**, a name to be spoken in the same breath as Titanic. Sort of bated.

Launched with much hoopla in July 1992, it sank with all hands in July 1993. UK Gold is something of a rest home for old soaps. Here they live out their retirement, happy among chums and competitors and, usually, safe from critics. Eldorado, Neighbours, EastEnders and Dallas, where Bobby has just been discovered alive in the shower. Triangle, filmed on a ferry in the teeth of a howling gale with permanently purple actors, still sails here. Howard's Way will soon be launched again. Nothing ends, everything begins again. It's almost *Buddhist*.

SO HERE we go again with Eldorado. The marmalade sun is still rising over the blueberry sea. The concrete is still glaring, the shirts still searing. Danes, Germans, Spaniards and French are still painfully practising their English with little sign of improvement. Great herds of Swedes sweep majestically over the plain. The Scotsman is still drunk. The Irishman still workshy.

Inaudibility is the first thing you notice. A dozen or so young people have been flung into the deep end of television. I don't think there is a shallow end. There is nowhere on television you can make a fool of yourself quietly. The needle heels of the all too audible Trish ("Eldorado's Queen of Song") beat out a tattoo on the marble floors, drowning their mumbling. A small but piercing pain begins to develop between your eyebrows.

Of all TV, soap speaks most immediately to the millions. It does our living for us. It saves us the bother. If you follow a soap, you are in some sense in it. But you cannot imagine wanting to sign on with Eldorado's doomed crew. It started aptly enough, with some youngsters kicking a teddy bear about. With the exception of Joy, who seems abnormally normal, the characters are unsavoury and, in some cases, urgently wanted by the police. Nobody actually seems to have a job and this can seriously irritate the viewer who has just sat down with her throbbing feet.

Strenuous efforts were made to save Eldorado. You can watch them throwing surplus passengers overboard and changing course.

But the verdict does not change. Lloyd George said, "Never apologise and be ruder the second time."

Poisoned darts in a world of predators

THEATRE
Michael Billington

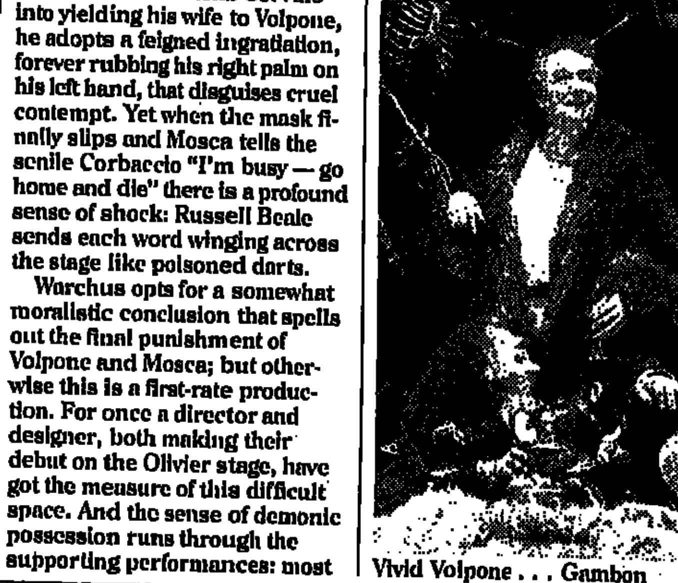
INORDINATE: that is the word that always seems to apply to Ben Jonson. And Matthew Warchus directs a dazzling Volpone at London's National Theatre, which has exactly the right quality of disciplined excess. This is a world populated by the possessed, for whom greed, lust and jealousy amount to a form of madness.

You sense this right from the nightmare opening, which shows Michael Gambon's Volpone being pursued across Richard Hudson's revolving stage by ravening figures with torches. Clawing his way back into his bedroom, he cranks up his horde of gold ready to greet the day. Instantly we are plunged into a world of dark dreams, teeming fantasies and a sinister Venice in which gold, "the dumb god", offers the only security.

Warchus gets across the essential point: that Jonson's characters, tricksters and predators alike, are all victims of an *idée fixe*. Gambon's Volpone, is a man driven by obsession to take hair-raising risks. He is very funny lying back in bed, with eyes swivelling in his face like silver balls in a puzzle box, hungrily surveying his putative heirs; but, as his hand reaches out to grab another pearl, you feel he could any moment give the game away. Only Gambon's occasional tendency to swallow words as greedily as he does gifts mars a superb performance.

Simon Russell Beale is, however, the perfect Mosca: a man hooked on power as much as his master is on gold. Russell Beale shows us someone for whom manipulation amounts almost to a sexual fetish: in the great scene where he tricks Corvino into yielding his wife to Volpone, he adopts a feigned ingratiation, forever rubbing his right palm on his left hand, that disguises cruel contempt. Yet when the mask finally slips and Mosca tells the senile Corbaccio "I'm busy — go home and die" there is a profound sense of shock: Russell Beale sends each word winging across the stage like poisoned darts.

Warchus opts for a somewhat moralistic conclusion that spells out the final punishment of Volpone and Mosca; but otherwise this is a first-rate production. For once a director and designer, both making their debut on the Olivier stage, have got the measure of this difficult space. And the sense of demonic possession runs through the supporting performances: most especially Robin Soans's frenziedly jealous Corvino, Trevor Peacock's tottering Corbaccio and Cheryl Campbell's imperious Lady Wouldbe who makes "I pray lend me your dwarf" sound as comically threatening as any line uttered by Lady Bracknell. Jonson's dark masterpiece is delivered with just the right intemperate energy.


Vivid Volpone . . . Gambon

Welcome to the house of fun

Will the rebirth of the Globe herald a new era for British theatre, asks **Owen Bowcott**

THE reconstructed Globe Theatre on Bankside, London, will not degenerate into a kitsch museum obsessed with only one playwright, its artistic director, Mark Rylance, promised last week.

Laying out an ambitious programme for the replica 16th century playhouse, the former Royal Shakespeare Company actor envisaged a touring company with a repertoire not restricted to the Bard's works.

"I would like to put on plays by Shakespeare's contemporaries, the medieval, Greek and Roman dramatic sources he worked from and new plays written specially for this theatre," Rylance said.

The 35-year-old classical actor has been a member of the artistic directorate at the Globe since 1991. Like others, he was enthused by the Hollywood actor Sam Wanamaker, the project's originator, who died in 1993.

The first purpose-built playhouse on the site dates back to around 1586, when London's population was 160,000, and 20,000 people were estimated to have gone to the theatre every week. Burnt down in 1613 after a spark from a cannon set fire to the roof, it was rebuilt but finally closed in the 1640s.

When excavations uncovered its original foundations, the building was found to have had 20 sides. Each section had 14 tiers of seats on three storeys covered with a thatched roof. The reconstructed version is estimated to have cost £12 million.

Rylance's three-year artistic directorship will begin full-time in January and allow him to act in the Globe's productions while selecting the plays and directors. He is not yet sure whether he will direct any performances himself.

The first performance is scheduled for June 14 next summer — Mr Wanamaker's birthday — but the play has yet to be chosen.

"I haven't had a chance to think fully about that," Rylance admitted. "I considered doing a new play, but I feel Shakespeare is most appropriate. Henry V has been talked about a lot. It may depend on the acting company I gather."

Many of the classical Greek plays, like Medea or Oedipus, he believes, will benefit from being performed on an open stage in the round. "I'm going to develop a core repertory group, who will dedicate themselves to exploring this space for a few years."

Some productions will go on tour, possibly outside the normal May to September season. The Globe company may also revive the Elizabethan tradition of strolling players visiting alehouses and the palace of Whitehall during the 12 days of Christmas.

Critics have suggested audiences may not relish authentic, open air performances when soaked by a sudden downpour. Global warming could help, Rylance remarks — as long as it doesn't go too far.

"If the Thames rose much further, it would flood the theatre. On the other hand I have a bet that Parliament will be flooded within 10 years."

Asked about the possibility of audiences being composed substantially of foreign visitors, he said: "I don't see tourists as being only interested in buying mugs with Shakespeare's head on. I have had long talks with Japanese and Americans; some of the conversations have been very profound, easily as stimulating as those with academics."

A temporary stage is in place and summer workshops begin at the Globe this month. The final stage, and its "tiring house" for the actors' exits and entrances, is being assembled at Greenham Common.

The prospect of a three-year diet consisting primarily of Shakespeare does not worry Mark Rylance. In a recent interview, he commented: "For me Shakespeare and his work is one of the greatest mysteries there is. It's open to every level of inquiry. I can't imagine ever getting to the bottom of it all before I die."

Theatre in the round . . . the new Globe cost £12 million

Notes on a blank sheet

INTERVIEW
Andrew Clements

BEETHOVEN'S Fifth Symphony has been the way into music for countless generations of music lovers across the world, but for Tan Dun, whose new work is premiered this week at the Albert Hall Proms, it unlocked a totally unexplored musical world. Born in 1957, in the remote Hunan province of China, Tan heard the Fifth for the first time when he was 19; his first western classical music.

He had just arrived in Beijing, selected as one of the first students out of 10,000 applicants at the newly reopened Conservatoire of Music, which had been closed for 10 years during the Cultural Revolution.

During that revolution, the only officially approved music was propaganda, but in his native province the folk music tradition and its rituals survived. Tan organised village orchestras, playing and singing himself, and when he eventually arrived in Beijing he found that "some of the composers selected by the Conservatory had heard western music, but I had come from a very remote countryside family, it was not like Shanghai or Beijing. In the test for the Conservatoire I was asked to do harmony and counterpoint and to play western instruments. For the harmony and counterpoint I made up my own, just guessing, and then the teacher asked me if I could play some Bach or Mozart on my violin. I said I didn't know any but could I improvise instead. So I improvised for 45 minutes and sang all kinds of folksongs. I was very different from the other students, but we all shared one thing — we had all been through the Cultural Revolution and we were all standing up on that ruin."

At the Conservatoire he was "a blank sheet of white paper", taught first by Russians — learning composition from two teachers who had been classmates of Schnittke and Gubaidulina, and conducting from a professor from the Moscow Conservatory. Visiting lecturers from the western tradition came and went — George Crumb, Toru Takemitsu, Hans Werner Henze — but Alexander Goehr stayed longer, teaching every day and taking Tan and his contemporaries through the 20th century from the Second Viennese School to the avant-garde. It was the decisive influence upon his composition but achieved at the temporary cost of losing his own musical roots.

"For the first three years at the Conservatoire I was totally involved with western classical music, forgetting what I had done — the Peking Opera, shamanistic music, whatever. Then in 1981 we had the chance to do some fieldwork in Quan-Shi province, down near the border with Vietnam. There are so many minorities down there, people very remote from the Chinese community, all with their own culture and primitive way of life, and they have managed to preserve their music. We had to transcribe it, and I found that I couldn't write it down — the music didn't fit into western notation. And then I remembered that I had done the same kind of thing a long time before, but now I was different, I was trained in western music.

"It woke me up, and from the journey to the south I came back to reconsider how I should deal with that music and write it down."

It is those two traditions, the western art-music tradition and Tan's native folk background, that interact so fruitfully in his music and give his works their special charge. "The uniqueness is something quite important. If you have a cultural counterpoint the most important thing is not putting the two cultures together but finding a new language between them, not cutting off either the western or my own tradition."

The first work in which he finally found his own language was On Taoism, composed in 1985 and one of the last pieces he wrote before he finally left the Conservatoire. Even to thoroughly western ears it is an extraordinary piece, which does truly open up an entirely new musical world — a kind of concerto for solo vocalist (a virtuoso part performed by Tan himself), whose vocalisations are juxtaposed with orchestral writing that uses Chinese string and wind effects, Chinese scale patterns and percussion instruments

Tan is now based in New York; he left China in 1986 to take up a scholarship at Columbia University after his music had been condemned by the authorities in 1983 as "spiritual pollution", and performances of it banned for six months. But he returns to Beijing regularly, and in 1993 went back to conduct a programme of his own works with the China Philharmonic. During the rehearsals the leader of the orchestra took him aside and told him to change one of the works in the programme — his homage to Paul Klee, Death And Fire — because it not only criticised Mao, but referred to the Tiananmen Square massacre. Tan refused and the concert went ahead — but with a "health warning" delivered to the audience by a mysterious man in a dark suit.

TAN IS now the leading figure in a Chinese diaspora of composers. In October he conducts the London Sinfonietta for the first time in a programme he's called the New Tide. It combines music of his own with works by his contemporaries, most of them now based in the West. For young composers in China now, he says, there are fewer problems in hearing what they want of western music, though none of it is offically sanctioned.

His major project, almost complete, is a first opera, Marco Polo, with a text by the British novelist Paul Griffiths. It will be staged in Munich next year. The subject seems obvious for him, an opera that must deal with two cultures in collision. Shakespeare, Dante and Li Po also appear in the cast, and the musical and theatrical worlds of western opera and the old Peking Opera will co-exist on the stage. As Tan says: "One plus another one isn't one any more, it's something new."

A CD of On Taoism, Orchestral Theatre I and Death And Fire is available: Koch Schwann 3-1298-2


Tan Dun: 'If you have a cultural counterpoint the most important thing is finding a new language between them' PHOTO: DAVID SILLITOE

Thunderous applause

BAYREUTH FESTIVAL
Martin Kettle

SAY what you like about Wagner, which they all do, but there are few experiences in any opera house to compare with the moment when the first E flat of Das Rheingold emerges out of the darkness to mark the beginning of the long journey through the Ring Cycle.

And if that E flat on the basses is a sound whose shiver-making potential cannot pale, nor can the experience of hearing it emerge from the pit here in Wagner's own theatre in southern Germany. The Festspielhaus, which Wagner built for performances of this very work, has been renovated since last year. It is brighter, less solemn and smartened up, which will not be to the taste of those who, unlike Wagner, want everything to stay the same.

The revival of 1994's Ring production by Alfred Kirchner is the centrepoint of the first week of this year's Bayreuth festival. Kirchner disappointed last year's visitors, and perhaps that judgment will be confirmed this year too. Yet Kirchner's approach has many advantages that set it apart from more frivolous contemporary productions. It is totally truthful to Wagner's meaning, it observes the situations of the characters, and minus a twitch or two it is as serious a rendering as one could want.

The pillar of this Bayreuth Ring is James Levine. He conducts a slow and unfolding version of the score, avoiding cheap thrills but steering clear of the perils of excessive slowness that have marked some of his recent London concerts.

John Tomlinson as Wotan, well known in London, has rarely been in better voice in this, his sixth season at Bayreuth. Thunder rumbled over Bayreuth during the performance, which seemed highly appropriate.

The hippest nerd in the movies

Chris Petit

Natural Born Killers
by Quentin Tarantino
Faber and Faber 119pp £7.99

FILM SCRIPTS are traditionally thin reading, a post-script to the film, and now that we can dismantle movies via video replay you would have thought their published days were numbered. How then to explain the Tarantino phenomenon? Pulp Fiction is the best-selling script ever, and Reservoir Dogs and True Romance shift enough copies to make him the envy of any author.

But however snappy Tarantino's lines, which are recited aloud by sections of his audience, they don't explain their print success. The scripts have become part of a spin-off merchandising business common to Hollywood but until now beyond the scope of the cult movie. (Imagine Antonioni T-shirts.) Tarantino — by taking Wim Wenders's movie-director-as-rock-star a stage further and working the influential film festival circuit, pressing flesh with the skill of a presidential candidate — has proved a consummate promoter capable of crossing into the commercial mainstream while retaining his individuality.

Tarantino wrote Natural Born Killers as an unknown, with the intention of directing it, and when that failed, sold it to the hammer-headed Oliver Stone, who traduced the screenplay, perhaps with reason, and tried to block publication of Tarantino's version which, the reader can now discover, displays all his usual hallmarks in embryo, minus his flip talent for casting dorks (Keitel, Travolta) and letting them act cool.

The story, told with brash cine-literacy, takes its cue from Badlands — lovers spree-kill like they were shopping — compresses that into the opening sequence, has them arrested, and spends the rest of the time reuniting them, the joke being that they don't stop killing just because they're in jail.

The later faults are there too. His magpie films work best as movie clips. Tarantino on the system's hypocrisy and the big bad media shows that he's no great message man and adds nothing to what director Sam Fuller said with more punch 40 years ago.

For all the self-mythologising, Tarantino deflects criticism by making no claims beyond a trash aesthetic. Anything goes and so far it amounts to The Three Stooges with guns. Pulp Fiction was The Three Stooges with guns, meets Robert Altman and J-L Godard. But he works because he understands the cheap fantasies of his audience: he's the quick-draw artist in front of the mirror. His is cinema at its most self-regarding, its narcissism the reason for its success, and an easy sell to a post-existential crowd too gleeful to notice that the looping, goofy dialogue is at the expense of narrative and character.



Quentin Tarantino: working the circuit PHOTOGRAPH: HENRIETTA BUTLER

The real test of Tarantino's lines is how little they apply to the person saying them, serving the rhythm of the scene rather than the beat of the character. They all sound like Tarantino — the McEnroe of the front stalls — a left-handed gun, hot-headed, voracious. Nerds get hip.

One can say in his defence that cinema always has been onanistic (cf voyeurism), and as Hollywood loses sight of its own past and grows cumbersome in the face of new technology and the proliferation of images from other sources, it should be no surprise that it is becoming more so. For the moment, one should be grateful to Tarantino for still offering some kind of alternative to the orgasmic bangs with dialogue and word-foreplay. His strength is his ability to break away from formula. His problem is how quickly, after four scripts, he is replacing those formulas with cul-de-sacs of his own. What lies beyond the mirror?

Siege mentality

Julian Evans

Blockade Diary
by Lidiya Ginzburg
Harvill 112pp £14.99

I ALWAYS wondered what the UN hoped to gain from its safe-haven policy. Political time, certainly; but after the agonising fall of Vukovar — is it already four years? — it was clear that for the Bosnian Serbs, encirclement was exactly their kind of war. "Protected areas" tidied the war into a military version of painting-by-numbers. Osijek, Jajce, Mostar, Sarajevo and Zepa: long before Srebrenica, the Serbs showed themselves to have the plodding, Sunday-artist patience of master-besiegers.

And what about the besieged? "Hunger [was] the most powerful underminer of resistance," writes Lidiya Ginzburg in her account of the Leningrad blockade of 1941-44; more than shells or bombs because "it can't be switched off". So the perfect siege could be conducted in silence, immuring the besieged with their hunger.

Lidiya Ginzburg's generation knew no rest; born in 1902, she spent her adult years in the dark thirties and forties. Because whe was a literary scholar of the formalist school, her persecution was doubly savage — she had to live long, as the proverb goes in Russia, to see change or her work published. (In that she succeeded grandly, surviving until 1990.) For the non-professional reader, it must be the diaries and essays she wrote which could interest us. Her Blockade Diary is a fascinating and confusing fragment of these, separated from the rest of her war writings, to be published alone in English.

Ginzburg's intellectual intensity apparently concealed a witty, sociable ardour. As one gets used to her style, lacking in personal passion, with Russian insistence on precisely rendered subjectivity, faintly unrelenting, its slight distancing effect allows it to spread its net wider. Leningrad must have been monstrous — the freezing and dystrophic dying in their hundreds of thousands, the years of punctual German bombardment, the extremes of starvation — it has a dark unimaginability. Yet Ginzburg's account is self-censored, free of dramatic fervour, and the effect is odd and stimulating. Other blockades, other times, become instantly vivid in "For months on end people used to sleep without undressing. A person knew their body was turning into something horrible"; and in "The soul of the bread queue is in the other conversation, the one filling up the vacuum of idleness, severely determinate and illusorily free." Eventually this little volume acquires more than diary status; a little snagged on abstraction, untainted by personal judgment, or indignation, it has a claim to stand as blueprint for the besieged.

There are residues of the ardent socialist, but not irksome ones: to say that social life is a mutual guarantee and "it was hard to distinguish love from hatred, towards those one couldn't leave", or that the secondary significance of survival in a siege — that just by that fact, the survivor helps their country to bar the path of an enemy that wants to kill it — seems peculiarly right three hours from London by plane today.

There is a lesson for a "humanitarian" mission here: Leningrad was a fighting city in which hope rested on one suffering being displaced by another, hunger by combat. But where the besieged are fed just enough to stay alive, and barred from action, hope will eventually be crushed. I haven't read a more persuasive argument than Lidiya Ginzburg's book for allowing the Bosnian Muslims to fight. For four years they have had an experience more bitter than a blockade, of being more demoralised by their friends than by their enemy.

Three women on the Nile

Margaret Riches

Writings on The Nile: Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale, Amelia Edwards by Joan Rees
Rubicon Press 116pp £13.99

TODAY, religious tensions notwithstanding, tourism is Egypt's most important industry. Yet it was only in the 19th century that Europeans "discovered" ancient Egypt, starting with Napoleon's attempt to incorporate it into his empire. By the 1820s, Nile tourism was beginning to flourish.

By the time this was in circulation, some of the excitement, intellectual ferment and burning curiosity stimulated by the continuing publication of accounts of new discoveries along the Nile was subsiding. Improvements in internal transport had reduced the duration of the Egyptian tour. The leisurely passage upriver on a *dahabieh* gave way to steamers and trains.

Joan Rees's book returns the reader to those middle years of the last century, when a trip to Egypt was a voyage of discovery. At this time, an increasingly comprehensive picture of ancient Egyptian society and its evolution was emerging from the competing archaeological activities of the French and the British. Rees concentrates on three remarkable women: Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale and Amelia Edwards, each of whom published an account of their experiences in Egypt.

Although Martineau has been resurrected by the feminist movement, she remains a shadowy figure for most contemporary readers. Yet she published countless books during her lifetime. The volume that came out of her Egyptian tour in 1846-47, Eastern Life Present And Past, is, like most of her work, out of print. We must take Joan Rees's statement of the interest and value of this book on trust. In her reflections on the beliefs and religious practices of the ancient Egyptians, Martineau displayed an openmindedness not usually associated with Victorian commentators. Eastern Life includes frank observations on contemporary life in Egypt.

Nightingale arrived in Egypt just over two years after Martineau had left (and at about the same time as Flaubert and Maxine du Camp). Her letters home are a wonderful evocation of the voyage with her friends, the Bracebridges. Shocked by the misery of the Egyptian poor, she concentrates on the ancient monuments and the impact of this formidable civilisation. But even as she wrote her entertaining accounts, Nightingale was tormented by uncertainties, by the new commitment to "God's service" she had made in 1837, but which had not yet taken definite form. It was her experience in Egypt that tilted her Christianity away from heavenly metaphysics and towards worldly suffering. She had something like a revelation in Abu Simbel. Later, she wrote of the Egyptians that "their God was my God"; Christian art depicted sin and suffering, but the iconography of the ancient Egyptians showed "the sinless soul which has never left the bosom of its God" and which finds Him "as near in one spot of his creation as in another, which does not wait for another world to enjoy his presence". When the call to action came with the Crimean war, she spread this God-like presence among the wounded soldiers.

Like Martineau, Edwards was an established writer before she embarked for Egypt in 1873. Her experiences there transformed and illuminated the remainder of her life, which she devoted to raising money for the preservation of Egypt's monuments. The Egyptian Exploration Fund is her legacy. Her classic account, A Thousand Miles Up The Nile, remains one of the best books written by a westerner about Egypt.

Science Books

Tim Radford

Life Cycles: Reflections of an Evolutionary Biologist, by John Tyler Bonner (Princeton, £10.95)

WHO COULD resist an author who confesses in line one of chapter one, "I have devoted my life to slime molds"? These are masses of amoebae which aggregate to organised unity, a little sausage or "slug" of individuals that nevertheless has a front and a back, which migrates and, acting as one creature, fruits and converts into spores for the next generation. Since it all happens in a few days, slime moulds are handy little monsters for anyone interested in how just a single cell turns into a multicellular organism, becoming very large, like a giant redwood, or very social, like chimpanzees, or culturally aware, like bowerbirds, or just very aware, like a human baby.

The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth, by James Lovelock (Oxford, £7.99)

LOVELOCK was the man who devised instrumentation so sensitive it could detect tiny traces of man-made chlorofluorocarbon in the atmosphere, a process that ended with them being more or less banned. When he invented the Gaia hypothesis, he meant it as a metaphor: a form of shorthand for the biosphere as a self-regulating entity which controls its own physical and chemical environment. The name of the earth goddess was just a vivid touch. Fellow scientists scoffed at what they took as a theological notion; tree-huggers adored it.

In this new edition (reissued with his original classic Gaia: A New Look At Life On Earth) he enriches the argument. An example: oxygen is vegetation's gift to the planet, but why is only 21 per cent of the atmosphere made of it? Lovelock has an answer that doesn't just sound plausible, it sounds right. Read this to find out how the world really works.

Signs of Life: The Language and Meanings of DNA, by Robert Pollack (Penguin, £8.99)

UNDER German nationality laws, a certain group of persons defined as *eindeutschfähig* or "biologically eligible" can automatically have citizenship. The other sort have to answer questions when applying. Until 1991, Pollack says, one of them was "What is the shape of your nose?" Once you let biology into politics, as Hitler did, it tends to stay. Once again, with a huge international effort to map the entire human genetic sequence, and explain why we are what we are, biologists have begun to question some assumptions about ourselves: this book will help with the answers.

Every picture sells a story

Linda Grant

"MISS BROOKE had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress," the publisher read. Good intro, really grabbed him. Julia Roberts for the film version? Or maybe Michelle Pfeiffer if she wasn't too long in the tooth. A kind of Frankie and Johnny reprise maybe? He read on. And definitely the author had literary merit. "Who is this George Eliot guy?" he asked his assistant. "It's not a bloke," the lad replied. "She's a woman. Her real name's Mary."

The publisher called for a picture. A pencil sketch was brought. His face fell. "Oh no," he cried. "She's a dog. We'll never get a feature in Vogue, let alone Vanity Fair."

So you think you've written the Middlemarch of the nineties. You are middle-aged and plain? You wish to be published? Two weeks ago, literary agent Derek Johns at A P Watt told the Guardian's Catherine Bennett: "Literary fiction is hard to sell these days. If you're planning to publish a first novel, you're looking at very low sales figures, and one of the responses to that has been to promote the cult of the author . . . If the author's a woman, she's got to be good-looking and if the author's a man, he's got to be interesting."

Do not go down and picket his offices. He is my agent (and I am neither young nor a babe) and he is only reflecting the realities of the marketplace in which an attractive 25-year-old is easier to sell than a dowdy woman in her fifties. The problem, he says, began with library cuts: "When I published my first novel in 1980, they printed 2,000 copies and half went to libraries. Now they'll print 1,000 and be lucky to sell 500. So publishers promote writers like rock stars, exploiting a good image. American feminists Naomi Wolf and Katie Roiphe were promoted as old-fashioned sexpots in a way that seems to contradict their writing — what's more, they appear to be complicit in this process, judging by the way they posed."

Good looks help male authors too but it is perfectly OK to be merely interesting, as Johns says. Martin Amis is a pint-sized Mick Jagger. Will Self seems to have been caught standing up in a pressing machine. Both look fine on the page. "I know the reaction we got to Rian Malan's photograph was extraordinary," says Rachael Kerr, one of British publishing's most experienced publicists, currently with Harvill. "My Traitor's Heart was a fantastic book, but I remember the entire features department at Tatler rang up saying can we come to the launch party."

Who are publicists selling attractive authors to? Not to readers but to the media. If the editor has a picture of an attractive woman, the review will get more space.

Guardian columnist Natasha Walter is concerned that the emphasis on youth and attractiveness is pushing authors into publishing too early. "They feel they've got to make a splash when they're young and this personality cult is so widespread. If you are a young female novelist, you get an author photograph on the review pages but you don't necessarily get respect. Publishers fall into the trap of thinking the public will be interested because the author is young and pretty. It doesn't convince the readers."

Pretty, young authors turn into middle-aged ones. If they are very good, they earn their literary place. Others, neither young nor attractive, will retire, discouraged, because their work never gets past first base. A halfway good book by an attractive young author is simply more likely to find a publisher than a half-decent one by a less photogenic writer.

Acting is a profession that depends for much of its effect on how you look. Writing requires invisibility, looking and listening, being the anonymous face in the room. The pre-eminent English novelists of the 19th century — Jane Austen, the Brontës, George Eliot herself — were unattractive and ignored. In their quietness, they saw everything. The eyes of society that showed them no mercy in their poor dresses were in turn dissected by a merciless eye. Novel writing has been the last revenge of the plain woman. In the nineties, even that single advantage is being snatched away.

War of the propagandists

Jonathan Steele

Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal
by Diego Cordovez
and Selig Harrison
OUP 400pp £27.50

IN THE wreckage of his other efforts at guided reform, Gorbachev's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan will always stand out as a unique success. Everywhere else he was overwhelmed by events. The results turned out to be far more radical than he or anyone else anticipated.

In Afghanistan, by contrast, things went more or less according to plan. The Soviet Union got out with dignity and without major bloodshed, and the regime to which it was allied lasted for a decent interval thereafter.

The first full account of the Soviet withdrawal is now available and is destined to be the classic work on the subject. Diego Cordovez was the UN negotiator, and his chapters are the edited version of fascinating diaries he kept over seven years of shuttling between major capitals and chairing rounds of talks in Geneva. Selig Harrison was one of the most zealous of the few journalists who covered the process.

While the war was on, he meticulously dissected the Washington side, reporting on the CIA's willingness to support even Islamic fundamentalists in the name of its anti-Soviet campaign.

Harrison was the first to publicise the term "the bleeders and the dealers", those Americans such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Bill Casey who wanted to prolong the war so as to enjoy Moscow's discomfort, and those like Cyrus Vance and George Shultz who were willing to negotiate.

With the end of the cold war, Harrison moved his focus to Moscow. Indeed, the best passages in Out Of Afghanistan are those with new material, the interviews he conducted with leading Soviet figures, and the transcripts he dug up of Politburo meetings.

This book turns on its head the rightwing line that the Afghan war led to the unravelling of the Soviet system and that by implication Reagan's aid to the mojahedin helped that cause. The opposite is true.

Gorbachev's perestroika was a response to internal factors. It led to "new thinking" in domestic and foreign policy, and disengagement from Afghanistan was the logical first step. It is almost the only thing for which his otherwise ungrateful compatriots are willing to praise the luckless Gorbachev.

A man almost as good as his word

Claire Tomalin

The Diary of Samuel Pepys
edited by Robert Latham
and William Matthews
HarperCollins 11 volumes
£8.99-£11.99, pbk

The Shorter Pepys
selected and edited by
Robert Latham
HarperCollins 1,100pp
£14.99 hardback

IF THE authenticity of Pepys's Diary were in doubt, what a piece of fiction it would seem — the work of a novelist of genius, more inspired than Defoe, franker than Smollett, deeper than Dickens, subtler than Proust. To support the theory, point out how carefully the Diary is structured. It covers the 10 years in which a young man is making it. His narrative charts a steady upward curve as he rises from nothing — a clerk with £25 saved up against trouble — to a position as a supremely successful administrator, courted, envied, trusted and valued by the King; a man about town boasting a fortune of £10,000.

Then look at the choice of decade — the 1660s — with its unparalleled sequence of public events: the Restoration of Charles II, the great plague, the fire of London, the wars with the Dutch when their fleet struck panic into the English by sailing up the Medway, burning ships. Next, the panoramic account of London, laid out in brilliant flashlit views, with its river, alleys, horses, hurrying servants, Members of Parliament, sea captains, beauties, theatres, gardens and palaces. Place and season follow one another in vivid novelistic sequence.

Pepys appears as a brave, not a prudent hero. At 22 — before the start of the narrative — he had married a penniless French Catholic girl of 15; love always hit him hard and he declared he had been literally sick for her. When the Diary ends, although they are sharing a fine house with what he calls his "family" of servants, his marriage is in tatters because of his persistent unfaithfulness, culminating in a passionate affair with Elizabeth Pepys's young maid, Deb Willet. On discovering this, Mrs Pepys's anger and grief are such that she does not wash for five weeks, a fact Pepys notes not unsympathetically, although he was relatively keen on soap and water. There are no children to distract her, and she swears vengeance, threatening to slit Deb's nose, and extracting repeated expressions of penitence and promises of reform from her husband.

Pepys has not only to dismiss Deb and swear never to see her again, but also write and tell her she is a whore. This she is not: it was he who corrupted her, and who was responsible for the precariousness of her situation. Frightful as these events are to him, in his account of them he gives both sides of the case, like the good civil servant he is: he loves Deb, longs for her and fears for her future, but he also acknowledges that his sin is great and his wife is justified in her rage.

When he ends his diary, depressed and believing his eyesight is failing, he notes sadly that, although he has been seeing her secretly, "my amours to Deb are past". Within months of laying down his pen, his wife died, of a fever. What novelist would dare to shape events so?

The oddity in his accounts of sexual transactions is that, after the early years, he wrote of them in a private language made up of French, English, Spanish and Latin words: "I did the cosa con much voluptas"; "toccar ses mamelles", etc. Since the whole Diary was protected by being in shorthand, there seems no reason for this special language, particularly as it is so easy to follow. It looks as though he adopted it, not as a protection, but as a distancing device, out of some inner embarrassment.

One of the greatest attractions of the Diary is that it is the voice of a young man, full of good humour, optimism, energy and commitment to his career. The buzz of enthusiasm sounds on every page. He is a meritocrat on the make, sometimes nervous of his great masters, but also scornful of their laxities. Often he works far into the night, but how he enjoys pleasures outside his work.



Consummate scribbler . . . Samuel Pepys at play while his wife has her portrait painted: a 19th century view by A Elmore MARY EVANS

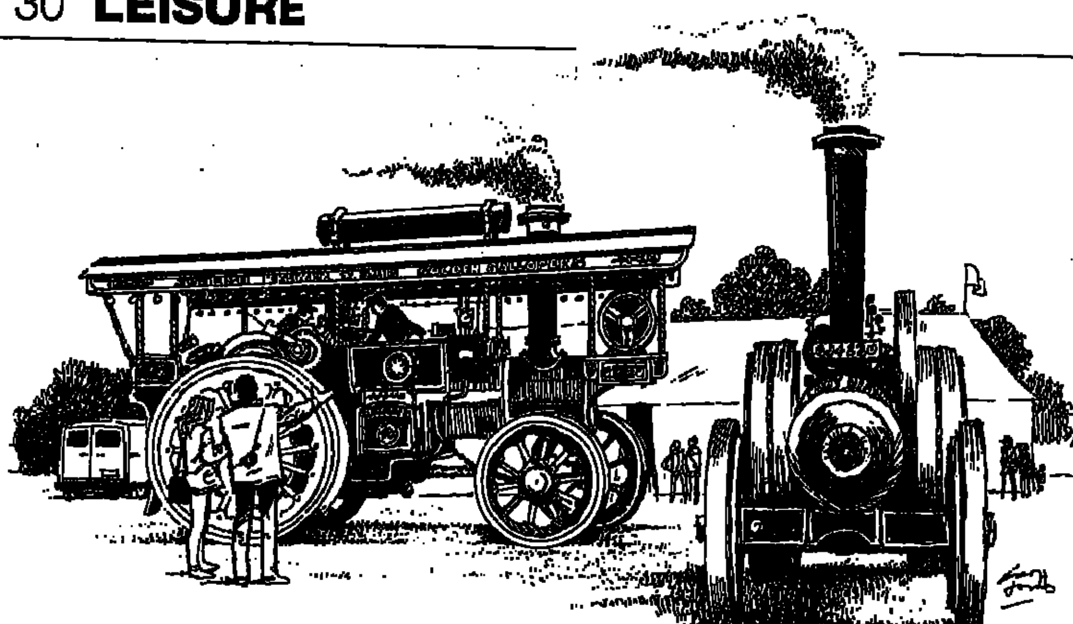
PEPYS'S ORIGINS were humble, though the larger clan of Pepys had its successful lawyers and other well-to-do members; but he was the son of a mere tailor and an uneducated woman, and one of 11 children. Still he was a bright enough boy to be noticed and plucked out of the family, sent to a grammar school, to St Paul's, and on to Cambridge. As a schoolboy he watched the execution of Charles I and applauded it, which caused him some unnecessary anxiety later.

He was a thorough pragmatist in politics. When a distant cousin, Edward Mountagu, became his patron and was concerned in the Restoration, for which Charles II gave him an earldom, Pepys, who had clerked for him, was rewarded by being appointed to the Navy Board. There his efficiency, diligence and passion for understanding how things work made him an outstanding public servant.

After the end of the Diary, Pepys lived a long and richly interesting life. He did not lose his eyesight, but seems never to have attempted to renew his writing. At his death he left it, with all his books and papers, to a nephew, with instructions that they should go to his Cambridge college for the benefit of posterity. The Diary remained unread until 1825, when a scholar, one John Smith, was paid £200 to decipher it. Although he did it pretty well, the editor, Lord Braybrooke, hashed and cut it for publication. This edition was reprinted several times, with additions. Two larger, newly-deciphered editions followed in the 1870s and 1890s.

Robert Latham's acclaimed 11-volume edition of 1970 was the first complete one, based on his study of the original over 30 years, and is surely as near definitive as can be hoped for. The Companion and Index volumes add significantly to the pleasure, and to have them all in paperback lightens the load when you are reading in bed. I should not myself settle for the Shorter Pepys, because the slow day-to-day progress is one of the delights of living with the Diary: but both length and price make it a good option.

Pepys's language is surprisingly close to ours, and presents few real difficulties; and whoever he thought he was addressing, he has something to say to all of us, even across 300 years. The best writers infuse the world with their energy, making it more real, more immediate, more troubling than most of us can be bothered to notice most of the time. That infusion of energy, quite as much as the historical record, is his great gift to us.



A mechanical enthusiasm

Colin Luckhurst

THE Lister-Petter Tyndale Steam Traction rally at North Nibley, only a few miles from home, seemed an attractive proposition late on a wet Saturday afternoon.

We approached the steam traction rally on foot. The road was lined with bright yellow traffic cones marked GLOSPOL. This stands for Gloucestershire Police, but the acronym suggested to my bizarre imagination the political directorate of some now defunct Eastern European communist hierarchy.

The jolly tunes of steam-powered fairground organs drifted to us on the wind through the steady drizzle.

The most dramatic items on view were the enormous steam traction engines, clanking and whistling as, with puffs of steam, they eased gently into motion.

But it was the display of stationary engines which held my interest, for many of them, some as old as the turn of the century, were manufactured at the factory only a mile from us which is still actively building specialist diesel engines for a wide range of uses.

This display of stationary engines reflected the need for power on the farm, for pumping liquid, and for a multiplicity of purposes in that period between the age of steam and before the widespread availability of electricity. And these engines, usually of a low-rated horsepower, have lasted so well with renovation and enthusiastic maintenance that more than 120 of them were chugging away powering water pumps, sheep shearing gear, and indeed any of the purposes for which they were originally designed.

Many of them, now all owned and maintained by enthusiasts, showed a history — a brass plate prominently affixed always recorded that the equipment was "Manufactured by R A Lister, Dursley, England" and a hand-made notice typically recorded: "Manufactured 1920, used to power a water pump or some farmer's need for motive power in a barn, long disused and neglected, found in a ditch 1974, and restored to full running order by the owner". The owner would most likely be sitting under an umbrella close by and more than willing to answer questions on his treasured toy as it hummed away industriously.

Sheep shears clanked off one engine, Alfa-Laval milk cylinders filled alternately off another. I enjoyed looking at all these sources of motive power, lovingly restored, chugging away off long stroke diesels, and clearly the source of so much pride.

"We have a magazine," one enthusiast told me. Not surprisingly, it's called Stationary Engines, the monthly print order is 6,500 and it circulates to a specialist interest market all round the world. No 256 was made available for my inspection. Guess what mechanical treasures the small ads offered?

To make a family day out, the side shows included historic cars, motor bikes and bicycles (including that other bit of local industrial history, the Dursley Pedersen) and, in a separate tent, some pens of rare breed pigs and goats.

Since my wife's hobby is our flock of rare breed sheep we were in more familiar territory here — though I am always amused how pigs on display in show pens respond by sleeping the time away while sheep are hyped-up, tense, and effectively on a nervous tip-toe. Gloucester Old Spot sows with nine of a litter slumbered noisily and a magnificent sand-coloured Tamworth was the most splendid porcine exhibit.

Chess Leonard Barden

CROYDON has become Britain's latest international venue, with two tournaments in a month. Their organiser is the energetic Chris Dunworth, who in the past year has run the UK's first national league plus several Fide-title events in London.

The Croydon initiative includes a new weekly club as well as children's coaching groups which already involve more than 150 boys and girls each week.

Last month's Croydon Central tournament was an easy win for top seeded Keith Arkell with 13/15. He had a surprise bonus when the landlord of the Oakfield Tavern decided to donate £350 prize money, and Arkell's total was suddenly worth triple Elite points in the Leigh Grand Prix, the UK £3,000 individual league. Graeme Buckley qualified as England's newest international master while the promising Richard Bates, aged 16, scored his first IM norm. Dunworth plans further IM events this summer which will add to norm and Fide rating opportunities in the British championship, the Southern Counties International and Hastings.

Keith Arkell-Chris Rice, English Opening

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 c6 The most popular current replies to 1 c4 are Nf6 and g6 or e6 and Bb4. **3 e4 d5 4 cxd5 cxd5 5 e5 d4** A gambit alternative is Ne4 6 Nxe4 dxe4 7 Qa4+ Nc6 8 Qxe4 Qd4.

6 exf6 dxc3 7 bxc3 gxf6 8 Bc4 Qc7 9 Bb3 Bf5 10 Qf3 e6 11 Ne2 Nd7 12 d4 Bd6 13 Ng3 Bg6 14 Bh6! White has a definite edge, since Black must castle long into the path of the advancing c pawn. Instead 14 0-0? 0-0! is less forcing.

Rg8 15 0-0 0-0-0 16 c4 e5 17 c5 Be7 18 Nf5 Bxf5 19 Qxf5 Rg6 20 Be3 Rdg8 21 g3 R8g7 Superficially Black is fighting back on the g file but . . .

22 d5 Resigns. Bxc5 23 Bxc5 Qxc5 24 Rac1 loses the queen, Bf8 allows 23 c6, while Kb8 23 d6 forks queen and bishop.

Graeme Buckley-Michael Franklin, Trompowsky Attack

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 Ten years ... this move would have seemed ... centric, now it is high fashion. **e6 3 e4 h6 4 Bxf6 Qxf6 ... Nc3 b6?!** Black's best plan is ... followed by d6, Nd7 and perhaps ... limiting White's early pressure ... hoping to cash in his bishop ... later in the game.

6 g3 Bb7 7 Bg2 Qe7? 8 N... d6 9 0-0 Qd7 10 Nf4 e5 11 ... e5 12 Nh5 Qe7 13 f4 Nd7 ... Bh3! exf4 15 e5! Vigorously ... ploiting Black's wasted ... moves. If Nxe5 16 gxf4 or dxe5 ... d6 Qd8 17 Nb5.

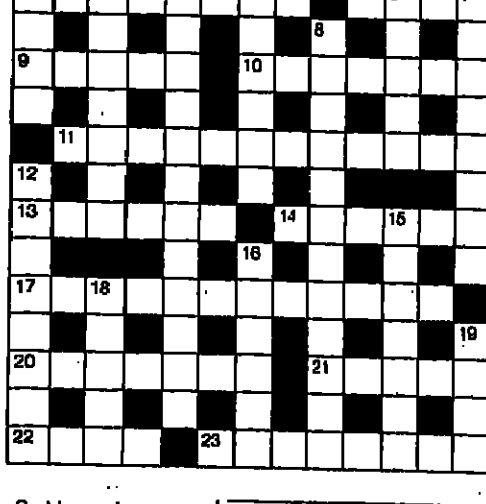
fxg3 16 e6 gxh2+ 17 K... fxe6 18 Nf4 Qf6 19 Qh5+ R... signs. Despite this fiasco, the ... eran Michael Franklin made ... excellent score.

No 2382

P Leko v E Lobron, Dortm... 1995. Hungary's Peter Leko has ... come the only player apart from Bobby Fischer to achieve a ... super-GM rating at age 15 and ... to be world champion in 1999. ... Leko (White, to play) stands ... but Black's defence looks ... How did he win quickly?

No 2381: The reader. Best play 1 . . . Rb6 2 Bd4 b2 3 Bxb6 (threat Bd8 mate) Kg5 4 h4+ Kh6 5 ... (threat 6 Bf8 mate) Kg7 6 ... Kh6! when 7 Bxb2 stalemates ... Bc5 Kg7 repeats.

Quick crossword no. 274



Across

1 Intestinal parasite (8)
5 Ugly mark (4)
9 Wild (as cat) (5)
10 Judas (7)
11 It wasn't good enough to go abroad (6,6)
13 American Indian or French gangster (6)
14 World-wide (6)
17 Unfair (at boxing) (5,3,4)
20 Naval or pleasure craft (7)
21 Din (5)
22 Require (4)
23 Relating to time of year (8)

Down

1 Bunch of grass or hair (4)
2 Fever (7)
3 Ignis fatuus (4,1,3,4)
4 Revolve (6)
6 Liquid measure (5)
7 Accelerator (8)
8 Have a long life (4,3,5)
12 Fortified tower (8)
15 Gold or silver in mass (7)
16 Cost or assault (6)
18 Bloodsucking insect (5)
19 Knock down — hill (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

ITALY are once again the bridge champions of Europe, in the persons of Andrea Buratti, Massimo Lanzarotti, Lorenzo Lauria, Maurizio Pattacini, Antonio Sementa and Alfredo Versace.

Lauria is a link with the past, having played with Benito Garozzo in the Blue Team's twilight years, while Versace is a terrific prospect for the future. A day after returning to Italy in triumph from the European Championships, he caught a flight to Bali to play for his country in the World Junior Championships.

Halfway through the tournament, Italy were lying second while the defending champions, Poland, were making steady progress after an uncharacteristically slow start.

When the two teams met, the result was a 20-10 win for Italy, who took the lead at that point and were never to lose it.

The win would have been more emphatic had it not been for some extraordinary developments on the deal above, which indicates that even the great champions are not immune to simple human blundering.

Study the deal and the two auctions, and decide what you think the outcome ought to be. Game all, dealer South:

North
♠ Q J
♥ 8 7 6 4
♦ Q 9 8
♣ J 9 4 2

West
♠ 8 4 3
♥ 5 3 2
♦ 5
♣ K Q 8 7 6 5

East
♠ K 10 9 6 5
♥ 10
♦ A 10 6 4 2
♣ A 10

South
♠ A 7 2
♥ A K Q J 9
♦ K J 7 3
♣ 3

When Poland sat North-South, this was the bidding:

South	West	North	East
Zmudz	Lanz	Balicki	Buratti
1♣(1)	No	1♦(2)	1♠
2♥	2♠	3♥	No
4♥	No	No	No

(1) Polish Club, in this case just a strong hand. (2) Negative, 0-7 points.

The final contract was the normal four hearts by South, and West made the natural lead of his singleton diamond.

In the other room, the auction was:

South	West	North	East
Lauria	Las'i	Versace	Gawrys
1♦(1)	No	1♥(2)	1♠
Dble	2♣	No	No
2♥	No	4♥	No
No	No		

(1) Conventional strong opening. (2) Negative, 0-7 points. Here the contract was four hearts by North and it seemed unlikely that East would hit upon the ace of diamonds as his opening lead, which he needed to do if the contract was to go down. So what should happen?

A big swing to Italy, you say? Well, at the first table the Italian West did lead his singleton diamond. East won the ace and returned the two, a suit preference signal for clubs, but West "ruffed" with a spade! Adam Zmudzinski easily made an overtrick now, 650 for Poland.

At the other table, by the time the bidding had finished everyone had forgotten that North was supposed to be declarer — after all, his one heart bid had not meant hearts. Lasocki as West led his singleton heart out of turn, but Versace put down his hand as dummy, and the Poles quickly took the first four tricks to defeat the contract!

Athletics World Championships

Christie loses his crown

John Rodda in Gothenburg

DONOVAN BAILEY ran 100 metres to restore his country's sporting reputation as much as to win a world title here. The memory of Ben Johnson, and the way he besmirched Canada's name at the Seoul Olympics in 1988, is a scar which Bailey and Bruny Surin, who was second, did their best to heal by peaking at the moment it mattered.

Bailey signalled his challenge with some speed early this year in the United States and ran the world's fastest 100m this summer — 9.91sec — in winning the Canadian title in Montreal last month. On Sunday he did not need that sort of pace and his winning time of 9.97 is the slowest at the world championships since Carl Lewis took his first title with 10.07 at Helsinki in 1983.

Britain's Linford Christie finished sixth in 10.12 but some 20 metres beyond the line began to limp and then collapsed. The medics were quick with ice packs and a binding and he walked off the track helped by his agent Sue Barrett.

He went to hospital on Monday for an ultra-sound scan and left for Munich on Tuesday to visit the specialist who has been treating him for the last couple of years, Dr Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wolfahrt.

So long as there is no tear — and that would have been determined here — the chances of him sprinting again before the end of the season are realistic.

However, in view of the bumpy time he has had, with early defeats, niggles and twinges and finally this injury, it may be wiser to forget this summer, rest and go back into training for another season.

He says how much he enjoys his daily training regime and there is no evidence that he has lost his enthusiasm for athletics except that he finds the media hard to cope with.

Christie, who has been adamant that this would be his final season and that he would not defend his Olympic title, seems eager to return quickly. "The season has a long way to go," he said. "I want to prove that was not the real Linford Christie out there. I feel I have let a lot of people down."



Donovan Bailey: joy of success

The disappointment may yet spur him to continue next year. "I'm absolutely sure I could have won the race if I had been fit," Christie said. "I'm not finished yet. I will come back and show them that I am still the fastest man."

Darren Braithwaite was offered Christie's place in the 200 metres but declined it in order to concentrate on the sprint relay.

Jonathan Edwards restored a golden glow to Britain's world championship team with an astonishing performance in the Ullevi Stadium on Monday. Edwards smashed his own world record twice when leaping to victory in the triple jump. The 29-year-old Gateshead Harrier left the rest of his rivals scrambling for second place from the moment he landed at 18.16m with his first effort.

It obliterated the mark of 17.98 delivered in the northern Spanish town of Salamanca last month. Edwards's rivals looked on stunned — and they were shaking their heads in disbelief when he extended the record to 18.29m with his second attempt.

Missing out the next two rounds, Edwards settled for a modest 17.49 in the fifth, before forgoing his last one. Bermudan Brian Wellman slipped into second place with 17.62. His next effort was ruled a no-jump and this confirmed the man who used to refuse to compete on Sundays on religious grounds as champion.

He embraced Wellman and bronze medalist Jerome Romain, of Dominica, who reached 17.59, then saluted the crowd with a huge Union Jack.

Britain may claim part of one gold medal won on Sunday. Fiona May, born and raised in Derby where she was living and competing when she won the World Junior long jump for Britain in 1988, took that title here in Italy's colours as Heike Drechsler of Germany was sidelined by injury. May did not leave Britain only because she did not get the support that was deserved; she married the American-born Italian pole-vaulter Gianni Iapichino.

The women's 100 metres title went to the 30-year-old American Gwen Torrence. She always looked sharper in the preliminary rounds and in the final on Monday evening had more than enough to hold off the Jamaican, Merlene Ottey. Irina Privalova of Russia was third.

In the women's 100m hurdles, Olga Shishigina of Kazakhstan, who has dominated the European scene this summer, suddenly ran out of the zip and snap she has shown so consistently and Gail Devers, the American Olympic champion, took the prize by 0.12sec — a large margin in such an event.

Here was a case of an athlete who can produce the series of one-off performances the Grand Prix circuit requires not being able to cope with another who puts three races together and has the commitment and sharpness needed at the end.

Cricket County Championship round-up

Northants roar ahead

Guardian Reporters

IT WAS a perfect day for the faithful at Northampton in the county championship clash against Durham. During a morning of high-quality, absorbing cricket, they rose to acknowledge a magnificent hundred by their old favourite, Wayne Larkins. A century by any of the home players could not have been applauded more warmly.

Then, in the afternoon on Saturday, with a display of staggering ineptitude by the Durham middle order, five wickets fell for 11 runs, ensuring that Northamptonshire's quest for their first championship remains on course.

Victory by an innings and 76 runs (Northants 492-5 dec, Durham 148 and 268) puts Northants 16 points ahead of Middlesex and 21 in front of Warwickshire. The championship, like the Test series, is bubbling along nicely.

The wickets were shared by the spinners. Anil Kumble took four to bring his season's tally to 75, while Jeremy Snape, with his looping off-spinners, achieved a career-best five for 65. Larkins's century completed a full set of hundreds against first-class opponents in England. It was not his most explosive innings, more of a measured knock.

Middlesex, meanwhile, have become remorselessly efficient in pursuit of the championship. As they headed towards their fifth win in a row, the last four by an innings, their play carried a measure of single-minded, lethal competitiveness guaranteed to disconcert Warwickshire and Northamptonshire.

They beat Nottinghamshire by an innings and 186 runs at Lord's. Nottinghamshire offered no more than token resistance. Their total of 116 was their lowest of the season.

Middlesex made 587, with powerful knocks from skipper Gatting (148), Pooley (133), Brown (83) and Ramprakash (62). Nottinghamshire scored 285 in their first innings and were then bowled out for 116.

There was no shortage of centuries for Essex who closed their innings on 662 for 7 with Hussain contributing 145, Gooch 142, Waugh 136, Rollings 85 and Irani 78. The total proved too high for Hampshire, who replied with 255 and 153. There was also victory for Lancashire in the match against Sussex. Half-centuries from skipper Watkinson, Gallian, Titchard and Wasim Akram helped Lancashire reach a total of 355 in their first innings. Sussex replied with 319 and fell short again in the second knock by 22 runs to Lancashire's 215. The defeat leaves Sussex lying at the bottom of the table.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

The Red Rose wilts

THERE were easy victories for Warwickshire, Glamorgan and Northamptonshire in the quarter-finals of the NatWest Trophy. But the argument between Yorkshire and Lancashire was not settled until the last over of the match.

At Derby, England's hat-trick hero of the fourth Test, Dominic Cork, was brought to down to earth with a bang when his county, Derbyshire, were comprehensively beaten by 116 runs by Warwickshire, who made 290. Cork's contribution to his side was just one wicket and 21 runs from the bat.

Glamorgan, who have never won a Lord's final, strolled into their second semi-final in three years when they piled up 242 for 9 at Cardiff and then dismissed Middlesex for 176.

At Bristol, Northamptonshire won their clash against Gloucestershire by 23 runs. Batting first, Northamptonshire made 226. Their bowlers then cast a spell on the opposition's early batsmen. In the end the home county were left to score 118 off the last 20 overs. However, they failed to get anywhere near the target.

Mike Watkinson, the Lancashire captain, contributed 55 and Neil Fairbrother 46 to the Red Rose's modest total of 169 at Headingley. Yorkshire made heavy weather of overhauling it, the winning run coming with only three balls to spare. Michael Bevan top-scored for Yorkshire with an unbeaten 60. In the semi-finals, Yorkshire will meet Northamptonshire, while Warwickshire take on Glamorgan.

Wells: in squad for fifth Test

SUSSEX captain Alan Wells looks set to win his first Test cap for England at the age of 33. He has been included in a squad of 13 for the fifth Test against the West Indies at Trent Bridge as a possible replacement for Robin Smith, who suffered a fractured cheekbone in the fourth Test at Old Trafford.

Also in the party are Essex seamer Mark Illot and Worcestershire bowler Richard Illingworth. The squad: Atherton, Knight, Crawley, Thorpe, Wells, Hick, White, Russell, Watkinson, Cork, Illingworth, Fraser and Illot.

JOHN FASHANU, charged late last month — with Bruce Grobbelaar of Southampton and Hans Segers of Wimbledon — with conspiracy to influence match results, had the final whistle blown on his footballing career when Aston Villa announced that their 31-year-old rumbustious striker was being retired on medical grounds because of a serious knee injury he sustained in the game against Manchester United last February.

AUSTRALIAN tycoon Kerry Packer's plans to buy up 900 of the world's top Rugby Union players for his circus suffered a severe setback when it was announced by the South African Rugby Football Union that none of its 28-strong World Cup squad had agreed to join his breakaway World Rugby Corporation. England's players will resume their talks with Twickenham officials next week in their attempt to reach an agreement that will keep Packer's circus at bay.

STEFFI GRAF, the world's top woman tennis player, said she has no plans to move from Germany despite the tax probe that targeted her and led to the arrest of her father. Peter Graf was held at his home near Heidelberg. According to the Mannheim state prosecutor, police were sent to Mr Graf's luxury villa because of fears that the former second-hand car dealer, who has been embroiled in a financial scandal over his millionaire daughter's earnings, was likely to flee the country.

SHAWN LYNCH, a South African cyclist who holds a British passport and won the keirin title at the national track championships in Manchester a fortnight ago, has been suspended for 12 months following a positive dope test. Lynch, aged 21, tested positive for an excessive amount of testosterone after a track meeting at Leicester in June.

A RESOLUTION to halve the international ban on drug-users from four years to two was rejected by an overwhelming majority at a meeting of the International Amateur Athletic Federation in Gothenburg.

AN INSPECTION of Damon Hill's Williams-Renault after he spun off while leading the German Grand Prix revealed a left-hand driveshaft joint showing an unusual amount of wear. "This could have contributed to the spin," said the team's technical director, Patrick Head.

THE BIGGEST television deal in the history of sport saw the United States network NBC pay the International Olympic Committee $1.25 billion for US rights to the Sydney Olympic Games of 2000 and the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

DIEGO MARADONA said that he would never set foot in the United States again after he was given only an eight-day visa instead of the 10-year visas his Boa Junior teammates received. "They refused to grant me a proper visa because I admire and like Fidel Castro," he said.